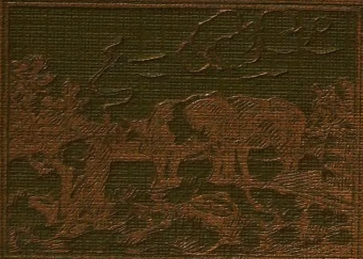


SPINNING WHEELS
AND HOMESPUN



Helen E. Williams.







SPINNING WHEELS
and HOMESPUN



"The Spinning Wheel came
It was winter Deep-drifted snow."

SPINNING WHEELS AND HOMESPUN



by
Helen E. Williams.

ILLUSTRATED BY

C. M. MANLY
A R C A

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TO
THE MEMORY OF HENRY S. WILLIAMS, WHO, WITH HIS OWN
HANDS AND ALONE, BUILT THE UNFINISHED ROAD, AND
WILL FOREVER BE ASSOCIATED WITH THE BEAUTY OF
THE OTHER SCENES DEPICTED, THIS BOOK IS
DEDICATED
BY
HIS SISTER.

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1.

Spinning Wheels *and* Homespun

Spinning Wheels *and* Homespun

TWO hundred odd years ago the spinning wheel came from New England behind a yoke of oxen along a blazed trail through the forest. It was winter. The snow drifted deep. The settler had chosen this season to travel partly because the trail would not be so rough, partly because they could cross rivers on the ice without being delayed by making rafts. But before the end of the fifteen day journey was reached a blizzard overtook the little cavalcade. The oxen plodded doggedly forward, but the storm and obstacles repeatedly thrown in his way were too much for the horse. So he was unhitched from the sledge, part of the straw taken out of a bed-tick, the two larger children tucked into one side and the three smaller in the other, this novel saddle balanced across the horse's back and the procession started on again—the elders ploughing ahead breaking the trail.

At last they reached the clearing where the settler, who had made a tour of inspection on horseback the summer before and received a grant of land from the British American Land Company, had built a rude cabin whose notched logs fitted into each other and

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whose interstices were filled with moss cemented with clay. A quilt served temporarily for a door, and they could look up the open fireplace to the top and see over-hanging branches of forest trees.

But it was shelter. A great back-log was rolled into the grate. With the aid of flint, steel and spunk a royal blaze was soon roaring up the primitive chimney, and a spare-rib—for the forest was full of game—swinging from the crane. They unpacked iron kettles with three short legs, and a copper warming-pan with one long arm by which it could be moved up and down between the sheets of the pressed bed—destined to stand against the wall for a wardrobe by day and be let down into a couch at night. They attached the baker, a pan-shaped contrivance standing over the coals on legs, and having a hinged cover so arranged as to reflect heat from the fire upon the baking rye and Indian bread. The new spinning wheel was carried proudly in, the calendar clock hung from a hewn beam. Their library consisted of the Bible and Pilgrim's Progress, for no vicarious romance or adventures were needed. They lived their own. They were actors in a drama of gripping realism. They were the Pioneers.

Necessarily few, the household goods were doubly precious. The settler spent the long winter evenings making a loom, furniture, buckets and snowshoes. And

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in course of time the women, who were skilled in all handcraft pertaining to weaving, furnished the cabin in best pioneer style. But it took time. First the sheep had to be driven into a yard down by the brook (Their deserted offspring amusing themselves, lamb-fashion, by running races or shaking their absurd, waggish little heads and "jompig all de tam jus' de sam' dey was crack.") and taken one by one into the water to have their fleece washed. Then they were sheared and the wool hand-carded into "bats" for mat-tresses, or sent to the mill to be made into rolls and colored. Though sometimes the thrifty housewife colored it herself with dyes concocted from boiled weeds or roots. The beautiful green of old breakfast shawls being produced by dipping the wool first into goldenrod dye to make it yellow, and then into a preparation of blue to make it green. Grey and brown were furnished, respectively, by the bark of maple and butternut trees.

These colored rolls the daughter of the cabin attached to the spindle, drawing or spinning them out with one hand as she revolved the wheel with the other. When the spindle was full she transferred them to the clock reel in skeins of ten knots with forty threads to a knot. Three or four skeins were called a stint or a good day's work. Her mother, meanwhile, sat at the loom, by a deft manipulation of shuttle and treadles weaving

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first the warp or long threads and then the woof or cross threads into homespun cloth for blankets, dresses, suits or beautiful fabrics. The shawls possessed a soft blend of colors exquisite as a Paisley, while the rugs and carpets lasted practically forever.

When the daughter took her turn at the loom she was often assisted by some of the young men, who rode many miles on horseback to vie with each other for the privilege of spooling the quills. There was no far view or open stretch of country then. No looking off. Just woods—woods—woods. Moonlight did not mean memory but promise. They had a prescient sense of something bigger than they knew, coming, to which their virile manhood gave glad response. Sometimes they passed little clearings where the cabin windows were darkened inside with skins because the men were off husking or striking out flax in an outbuilding, and if wolves saw a light. Sometimes there was a race with wolves. At all times it was a pleasant contrast to lift the latch string and come in out of the night and silence, and be greeted by the whirr of the spinning wheel, the click-clack of the loom. Cheerful to join the busy group before the glowing back-log. To string apples to dry and spool quills for the shuttles and laugh at nothing with the girls, to admire their mother's new hooked mat with its gay flowers, and marvel at their father's space economizing combina-

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tion table-sideboard-armchair, whose fragrant curly shavings were seized with crowing delight by the baby as they dropped on the floor. Inexpressibly cheerful, when the sleepy baby had been tucked into her trundle bed and spinning wheel and loom were still, to draw close to the fire and roast apples and nuts, pass cider and cakes and relate hairbreadth escapes as homespun as their clothes. Or discuss the whirlwind courtship and marriage of one Cornelius Peabody, who had seen Betsey Straw vault over a five rail fence, carrying two buckets of water from the spring, and had on the spot fallen in love with the vital grace of her.

Interesting even to revert to that staple subject flax crops past and future. For flax cultivation as well as sheep raising was a necessary adjunct to pioneer life. After going through preliminary preparations with hetchel and swingle board, the flax was spun on the smaller flax wheel and then woven on the loom into all sorts of household linen. It was not long before itinerant preachers began to hold religious meetings in scattered school houses. When they came in the evening each individual brought his own candle, and the service was held by what was called early candle-lighting. The elders would appear in their finest wool homespun, to which an extra gloss had been given at the mill. And the children, piously taught that "the chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy Him

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forever," were bravely decked out in new checked gowns and tow pantaloons and suits.

Customs may change but boy nature is ever the same. Until their majority, when boys received "freedom suits," with the privilege of keeping what money they earned and furnishing their own wardrobes, their suits were spun and woven and usually made up by their mothers. It so happened that one fond mother, wishing her two handsome little boys to have something especially fetching, separated the very finest of the flax and treated it to some then secret process so that the linen she wove was white as driven snow. Out of this she made two linen suits in which she proudly arrayed her two sons ("The best part is in the middle"), and sent them off to Sunday School. All the other boys wore tow suits of coarse quality. In their eyes to be different was necessarily to be wrong. They began to laugh and point derisively.

"See the little white angels—see the little white angels!"

The brothers returned home less immaculate—the floor of the shed where they had wrestled was not overly clean—and somewhat subdued. Not wishing to hurt their mother's feelings they kept their sartorial troubles to themselves. Only next Sunday, when the beautifully laundered but obnoxious suits were produced, they stoutly refused to go to Sunday School, and as a

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concession were allowed to go to Church instead. After plotting darkly together they hit upon the expedient of lagging behind till Church had commenced and then slipping inconspicuously into a back seat where no one would see them. Their mother may have divined the state of affairs, for she folded the white suits away and reinstated the tow.

While the pioneer women plied shuttle and treadle and "doubled and twisted," the men cleared the wilderness, preparatory to raising crops and building more consequential abodes.

Everything had to be done. *Everything*. Bridges constructed, roads made in lieu of Indian trails and timber felled. But the rain of hardship instead of rotting them made them grow. They realized that those who cannot succeed without foreign aid will never do anything really good even with the help of others. Day after day the woods resounded to the metallic ring of their axes. For men fought the forest like an enemy, never dreaming that a time would come when it would be called Nature's balance wheel, preventing soil erosion, preserving streams for game and exerting ameliorating climatic influences. Some of the logs they rolled into piles, covered with dirt and by a slowly burning process converted into soft coal. The maples and elms were burned to ashes, which were leached and the lye boiled down in great iron kettles to make

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salts. This was put into sacks and drawn by oxen, which were at first more numerous than horses, to Montreal or Quebec, where it was made into potash and soda. The former soon became such a lucrative and commercial factor in pioneer life that asheries and potash factories were built. Salts were often exchanged for other commodities, so that the oxen were laden both ways.

In the West the canvas-covered waggon was the ark of trade, and the turn-pike its great artery. Mail was first carried on horseback or dog-sledge, according to the season, and then from post to post by Hudson Bay freighters. There was no certainty as to when it would reach its destination, and events of world wide interest were often only heard of after many months.

An amusing true story, illustrating the omnipotent power attributed to Canada's late Premier by his race, is told of a French-Canadian habitant also cut off from mundane happenings. Coming out of his mountain isolation for his bi-annual descent to the village metropolis, Oscar accosted the first acquaintance he met and proceeded to "put questions into him."

He was told that Queen Victoria had died. At once he was all sympathetic concern.

"*Non?* Sacre! Mais dat wan beeg shame..... Who get Victoriaw's job?"

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"The Prince of Wales," his informant answered.

Oscar ruminated.

"*Par Dieu!* Must be good frien' to Laurier!"

The early settlers used to combine work and pleasure by having quilting, corn-husking and barn-raising "bees" followed by dancing and refreshments. Once forty yoke of oxen were assembled to move a district school house to a more central location.

It was about this time that people loaned money "with use" instead of "interest," and printed summons from the Superior Court to serve as jurymen concluded with the caution: "Herein fail not at your peril." But earlier when Kingston was still a fur trading post that a line of post-houses extended from Quebec to Montreal, and the water *route* between the latter and Toronto was accomplished in Government *bateaux* from which the passengers had to disembark, as the different rapids were reached, and walk through dense undergrowths of solemn gloom evoking "a pleasing horror." And farmers were obliged to build stone enclosures to protect their hens and sheep from predatory mink, foxes, wolves and bears. While their wives had their spinning interrupted by Indians throwing a brace of ducks on the cabin floor, demanding by pantomime potatoes in return.

These friendly St. Francis Indians were vastly different from those bellicose Redskins to whom Boquet

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in one of his 1767 letters refers with the pregnant words: "There appears to be a few savages yet on these frontiers but every tree is become an Indian for the terrified inhabitants." Often and often farmers ploughing fields near a river or bay or inland lake find sinister reminders of bygone skirmishes between their ancestors and Indians. A tomahawk and stone arrowheads ploughed up near the city of Sherbrooke recall an episode when the beautiful St. Francis valley was mostly populated by Indians.

A party of pioneers were returning to Montreal, their canoes laden with supplies against the rigorosities of the then imminent winter, when they were pursued by Indians and robbed of their precious cargo. Stung to reprisal by months of semi-starvation, as soon as the river was clear of ice in the spring they started in their canoes for the Indian encampment, where they set fire to the wigwams. Furiously pursued, they were forced to land, some being killed by poisoned arrows on the veritable spot where the exhumed arrowheads were retrieved. Their leader escaped by jumping from a boulder, which has ever since been called "Roger's Rock," and performing the Leander feat across the St. Francis River near the present site of Bishop's College.

In old Settlement days men often helped one another, turn about, getting in crops or harvests. Fol-

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lowing this prevailing custom a settler went to "change work" with a neighbor—accompanied by his young wife, who was afraid to stay alone on account of prowling bears and wolves. When the work was finished it was already growing dark, so they lighted the tallow candle in their tin lantern before starting back along the zigzagging forest path. Darker and darker grew the woods. Their flickering light made the trees appear preternaturally tall and forbidding, and the commonplace landmarks ghostly and weird. They were only a little more than half way home when from the North, a region of unbroken wilderness where no settler had as yet explored, came the single prolonged howl of a wolf. This recognized signal for attack was almost simultaneously answered by scores of blood-curdling howls. Fearful lest if they went too quickly the tallow candle would go out leaving them in utter darkness, the terrified pair hurried along the uneven trail as fast as they dared.

Nearer came the howls of the wolves. And nearer. Now they could hear their panting breaths. But through the forest black the never-so-welcome-before grey of clearing showed. Reckless with safety in sight, they bounded over the brushpile fence and plunging through the cabin door drew in the latch string. All night the ravenous pack howled for its prey. At daybreak, when they slunk away and the

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settler ventured to look out, the ground and even the sod was torn up and bits of fur and bones strewn about. For according to wolfology every pack has its leader which provides rations or, failing, pays the penalty.

These perilous days were followed by more peaceful, which may have proved irksome to certain adventurous spirits who enlivened existence by smuggling and making "coniac," as counterfeit money was called. The latter surreptitious practice was carried on to such an extent that a village street to-day is known as "Coniac Street."

Josephus Tuck, the alias by which we will designate a man possessed to a marked degree with the defects of his virtues, was a veritable Deacon Brodie of domestic circumspection. He preached with an aplomb and fervency which won him universal esteem and prestige. But from time to time he absented himself and enjoyed the pleasures of travel.

His friends were astonished and highly indignant when vague rumours floated back accusing him of circulating counterfeit money. For a time he stayed at home. But having once tasted the spice of danger it was, perhaps, impossible for him to stop. The first step was his to take; the rest of the road was with Fate. So Josephus Tuck continued to manufacture "coniac" in a secret place constructed in the hay-mow of his barn. He had boards on the wall next the woods

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arranged so that at a moment's notice a blow of the fist would knock them down, and a horse always saddled in readiness upon which to ride away into the woods. Once he escaped from importunate investigators by walking backward into these woods, and his pursuers seeing his tracks in the snow supposed he had gone in the opposite direction. And once, when away alternately preaching and circulating "coniac," he was surrounded on a hay-stack, where he kept a score or more at bay by flourishing a scythe expertly and hurling wrath and damnation at such venturesome spirits as essayed to climb up the hay-stack. He was never at a loss for an answer.

"How are you, brother Tuck?" one of those who believed him to be the most maligned of men asked in concern as he cavorted past tied securely if ignominiously on a mule's back, *en route* for a trial—where nothing against him could be *proved*.

"Steadfast and immovable," he called back, nothing daunted.

Who is it says experiences are like cheroots? That often they begin badly, taste perfect half way through and at the butt-end are thrown away never to be picked up again. He could not have been speaking of experiences that wind along the road to Yesteryear and meet old Romance at every turn. Sometimes he masquerades in homespun embroidered with golden glam-

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our. You see a merchantman, carrying silver and gold bullion from the West Indies, cruising with the British fleet off the American Coast during the war of 1812. Someone on board proves faithless to his trust and, aided by confederates, lands with a wealth of treasure. Crosses into Canada, paddles across Lake Champlain, up a succession of rivers and is seen disappearing into the woods. Months pass. Then strange looking men come, spend weeks in the woods, go away again. Others follow them and likewise depart. Still others. At last, giving up the quest, they show the curious natives a dog-eared chart, giving explicit directions—up to a certain point—as to where the buried treasure was to be found. Their hard-working listeners thrill to the thought of fabulous wealth so near. The forest they have feared and fought long at last is going to give each his heart's desire. It is a fairy story come true. Only—it does *not* come true. A link in the chart is missing. For months their usual avocations are neglected. At last one of the searchers was forced to acknowledge, "I hunt it up, and I hunt it up, but I cannot find it." The hidden treasure is still hidden, but it is no myth. Any day an unsuspecting farmer clearing his wood lot may find it, and in that moment become a Croesus.

But Canada has her myths and is replete with folklore of the first water. There are places where people

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live in what Louis Fréchette would call "full fantasmagory." Not only do spectres of man and beast perform the incredible during night watches, but even the elements play tricks with their senses. And some of the legends would seem to indicate that the hypnotic science of India fakirs was practised. But none of the superstitions have the same gilded illusion as one handed down from generation to generation pertaining to the bells of Easter. These bells were said to escape from their sombre belfries, in Quebec, during the melancholy vigil of Good Friday. In anticipation of the event children watched the sun set and darkness close in. Watched with such intensity that presently they actually saw the shutters of the old towers cautiously open themselves, and the bells like a flock of birds fly out. The little ones came first, silent but blithe at the prospect of liberty, while the larger ones majestically brought up the rear, commanding manoeuvres. Through the immensity of space they winged their flight toward the Celestial City, from whence they would return, Easter Morning, to peal forth joyous messages of Resurrection to the world.

An adopted son of the West, sated with mushroom growths and hurry-go-rounds, called the Ottawa the River of Oldness, and waxed lyric extolling the charm of villages that grow beside peaceful waters and orchards which have blossomed upon four generations.

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Sitting a little back from the Ottawa, at Montebello, and dating from the Seigniorial period of the French Regime, is the Manor House de Petite Nation, first granted by the Company of the West Indies to Bishop Laval and later to become the historic home of the Papineaus. Built of stone quarried in the neighborhood, rising into towers covered with ivy, and surrounded by its wooded miles, the mansion presents an imposing aspect unsurpassed by any survival of the Seigniorial system in Canada. Here the Canadian Patriot, as the Hon. Louis Joseph Papineau was called, passed his declining years, while under the floor of the mortuary chapel near lie his cremated ashes. On the estate is also a museum which he filled with curios brought back from the jungles of India and other remote regions. But it was less of these the Patriot talked, in reminiscent vein, than of incidents connected with the Rebellion of 1837-8, which resulted in Responsible Government. His favorite story of his escape with his son across the Border he made so realistic that his listeners could hear the tramp of "Regulars" on the bridge beneath which they were hiding, the receding gallop of hoofs on the corduroy road.

In the village of Montebello and its environs lived habitants who came periodically to the Manor House to pay Seigniorial tithes. They "trap on de winter," and in summer camped in lumber shanties, men who

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could not swim often crossing "de reever," during a drive down the swirling peril, by stepping with precarious jauntiness from log to log. Their cabins for some occult reason never had more than the lower half painted. But one side of their fireplace boasted of deep pocket-like ovens, open at the top, in which fires could be built until the stones were sufficiently heated, when the ashes were removed and bread or cakes popped down and cooked by stored heat. And hardly a house or cabin was without its spinning wheel—some with the wheel made out of rude barrel hoops, some vividly painted and with the latest improvements. The habitant women were justly renowned for their weaving, a specimen of which, called "*catalogue*," is to be seen on the floors of the Jacques Cartier-Champlain-Montcalm suite in the Chateau Frontenac, at Quebec.

They were—and are—also indefatigable knitters. Sometimes as they knit, rocking back and forth in the straight-backed, deer-seated habitant chairs, they smoked clay pipes filled with *tabac Canayen*. Sometimes they sang gay little *chansons*, keeping jig-like time the while with their feet. But always they rocked. Sundays they arrayed themselves in the bright colors so dear to their heart and rattled in to Church from miles around, hitching their two wheeled gigs to the fence and leaving their wooden sabots outside the door. Their weddings, which dispensed with the postscript

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of a honeymoon trip, often lasted three or four days, the entertainment progressing from house to cabin with "plaintee de grande hooraw."

Until recently Indians and halfbreeds still lingered in the village, shadowed by an alien law, surrounded by an alien race. And at her cabin door Mère Susanne, an old Indian squaw, sat with a shawl over her head braiding sweet-grass baskets, mending snowshoes and dreaming, perhaps, of those Happy Hunting Grounds where she would see her Redman brave ride forth again to victory.

For Redman and Paleface alike find Romance relegated either to the old days when they used to or to the future days when they shall. To fare forward looking upon Canada's present as the past of her future is to realize the Romance of that magic word *now*.

2.

The Passing of the Country Store

The Passing of the Country Store

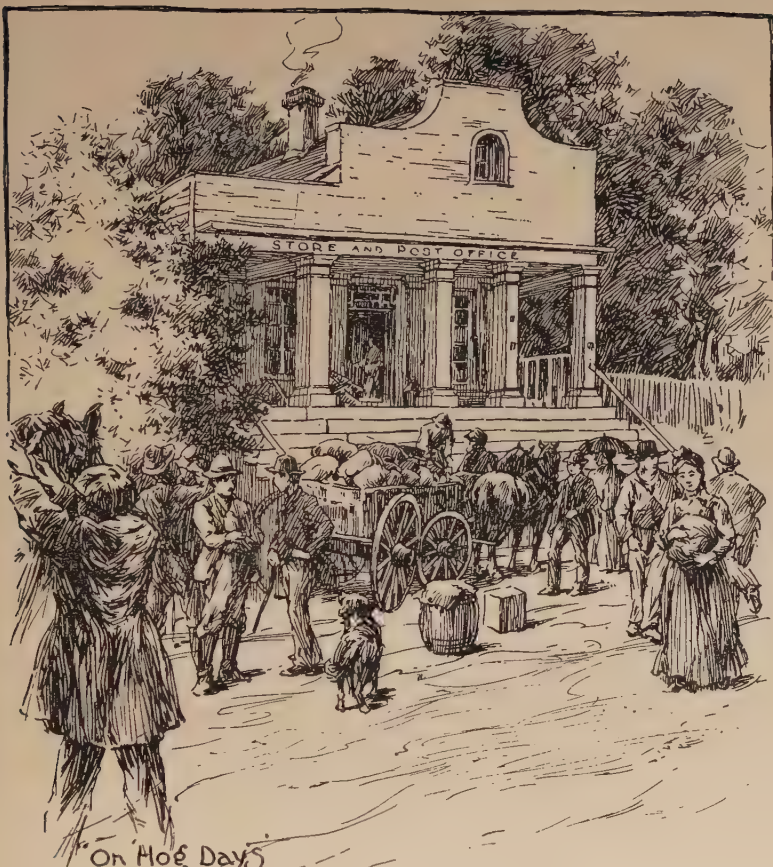
IT was a long, homely, barnish-looking building, and for thirty-three years of its unchecked life it presented to the occasional passerby a front guiltless of paint. The windows were like no other windows that you had ever seen in that they were a sort of cross between diamond panes and everyday house windows. The heavy wooden shutters like no other shutters in that they were never shut. Other stores in the village changed the "things" in the windows. The Country Store never did. And none of us ever thought of buying them. We stopped every day of our lives and looked at them—yes. But to have priced the match safe with Indians in black paddling madly below, while golden cherubs harped it above; to have in any way associated eating or drinking with the dishes bordered with colors we should have been sorely put to it to call by any unhyphenated name; to have taken away and used for any other purpose the antique china figures posing so jauntily upon their stands—that was not to be thought of, that would have been a sacrilege.

But within the store all this was changed. "So much for the frills," was the air here, "now we settle

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down to the realities. Ask what you will and the chances are we have it." And one could quite believe it, walking about. Everything was here. Not out in plain sight, to be sure, brazenly courting customers, but back. In barrels and cavernous tin cans with covers that lifted up, when groceries. In paste-board boxes with grass-green labels, when farm implements or fishing tackle, nails, razors or the like. Or gone after "aloft"—a region of seemingly endless resources, a very Eaton's or Wanamaker's—when of the heterogeneous species that one is always running out of, or growing out of. Whatever you requested they reckoned they had it "somewhere's about," and they usually reckoned right. Small wonder that in these degenerate days a certain diminutive lady, bewildered by the intricacies of New York shopping, exclaimed with mingled despair and longing in her voice, "Oh, if I could only get back on the stool in Sam Perkin's store and order anything from a hairpin to a pound of butter, *without all this fuss!*"

That was it. There was never any fuss. They had learned the secret of making haste slowly. Even when busiest there was an atmosphere of leisure. For they *were* busy. When the weather was propitious and the "roading" "fair to middling" trading kept pace, and the long lists the farmers fished out of their wallets, made out by their wives from day to day as things



"On Hog Days
the Square outside
was always crowded."



The PASSING *of the* COUNTRY STORE ---

"give out," piled the counter high with its equivalent, before the bottom of the list was reached. And on "hog days" (which, for some occult reason not apparent to the uninitiated, always fell on a Monday) the square outside the Country Store was crowded with big-slatted waggons filled with their porcine freight—all of which had to be duly weighed by Sam Perkins on the scales at the side. During and after this ceremony the store became the rendezvous of heavy-booted, broad-shouldered, loud-voiced, strong-featured men of all grades, ripe for a bit of gossip before starting back to the week's work. They stood and walked and sat and lounged, but always they smoked and always they talked. Their grammar was hardly of the sort we have come to associate with the Meiklejohn cult. Their phrases were a law unto themselves. Their expletives, to say the least, curious. A Noyes Westcott, a Mary E. Wilkins Freeman, a John Fox, Jr. would have found characters and local color enough for books every whit as good as *David Harum*, *The Debtor*, and *The Trail of the Lonesome Pine*. They were so emphatically themselves and nobody *but* themselves. The things whereof they spoke such real things. Slices, they were, of life—not the whole loaf, but slices. They gripped, as life grips. They made you *see*.

For, as the circle contracts and the waiting waggons without grow ever less in number, the pivot of talk

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turns from crops and agricultural exigencies to more personal affairs. They have the air of settling down, of being "more to home like." If Sam has no customers to wait on, he joins them. They tip back their chairs and shuffle down on to the small of their backs. They lower their voices. Then it is that they paint pictures with terse, graphic, telling words that set the thing there before you. Is it Steve Owens's barn that has been struck by lightning? You hear the crackle of the new hay, only just mowed away, see the old white mare, gotten out with difficulty, break away and rush back in to her death. Has Ned Hardy come to grief threshing? There is the back barn in the deepening dusk of a chill November afternoon; men carrying out and tying up bags of oats on the chaff-littered snow, men blackened of face and hand moving about the huge, sinister-looking thing itself, with its patiently treading horses and its fifteenth century orgy effect; the cry, the horror, the shouted commands above the din of machinery, the weighted silence when it at last comes, the furtive looks, the rough useless sympathy—you see, you feel it all. It may be that the subject under discussion has to do with a lifted mortgage, So-and-So, who has "lighted out" and where and why, or "My boy Ben," who is making good in the city—many and diverse as are the themes, they are as nothing to the picturesque way in which they are told.

The PASSING *of the* COUNTRY STORE ---

But it is in winter, when drifted roads and the thermometer twenty-eight below makes customers few and far between, that the true hierarchy of choice spirits congregate at the Country Store in full force. There is always sure to be a Joe, of gigantic proportions and fish-shaped physiognomy; an old Sid, whose general make-up (particularly his goatee, which saws the air like a pump handle as he chews tobacco) is identical with the popular conception of Uncle Sam; Tobe, of the stolid countenance and scathing tongue; Levi, who so religiously contradicts other people's statements that it is overlooked that he possesses no opinions of his own. These, seen every day in their devious walks of life, might pass as ordinary enough individuals. But in the Country Store, with a February storm raging without and good tobacco smoke ascending within, they come under quite a different category altogether. For here they hold drawn debates upon political questions of the day—or upon anything else that happens to crop up for that matter. And those who sit in high places might be edified or the reverse could they know how shrewdly they were sized up, how accurately their actions attributed to causes they would feign have others suppose unrelated. Although, as with the erudite of Aristotle's time, it is not so much the outcome of these reasonings as the reasonings themselves that have for us their interest.

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For, in the last analysis, it is their humor, their way of looking at things, that constitutes their uniqueness. It is a weird humor, but a very penetrating. The summer resorter, "spilling herself all over the place," may go away with the idea that she has impressed the clumsy hayseed in the corner. But he has taken her all in, and knows some things about her that she does not know about herself. The idiosyncracies of purchasers being a chapter of life that they love to peruse, of which they are proficient students.

They must have their little joke, too. Even if it be no more than the one which the writer once heard recounted as having been "worked" on a big hulk of a man who, notwithstanding his avoirdupois, was palpably "not all there," to use a local expression.

"You boys seen Henry sence he come back?" Joe upon this occasion started the ball rolling.

They hadn't.

"D'ever tell you 'bout the time Henry wuz practisin' fer them road races?"

For a wonder it appeared that he had not, or if he had they chose to ignore the fact.

I asked hastily for two quarts of molasses (the weather being cold it would run slowly); and then stared fixedly at the shining row of fruit cans, the designer of whose splendiferous labels must surely have been in league with the seed catalogues. Joe scrunched



"They lounged,
Smoked;
and always
they talked."

C. M. M.

The PASSING *of the* COUNTRY STORE ---

some tobacco in his fist, filled his pipe with due circumspection and continued.

"Wa-al, it'ud made you laugh jest ter see him a-amblin' lon', happy ez a four month's old heifer. One day I stops him.

" 'Henry,' sez I, kinder stern like, 'what's up, Henry? What duz this mean?'

" 'I'm a 'arrier,' sez he.

" 'A "arrier?" sez I, 'a "arrier?" What's ever a "arrier," Henry?'

"He lays out ter tell me fer 'bout an hour. 'an' now I gotter go,' sez he. 'Fust I walks, an' tharn I trots, an' tharn I paces, an' tharn I hacks. I ain't no slouch uv a 'arrier, by *heck*,' sez he.

" 'Henry,' sez I, 'you know what you oughter do?'

" 'What?' sez he.

" 'You oughter in these here practisin's o' yourn tie weights ter your boots so's if you get ter goin' fair with 'em on, you'll find it jest *awful* easy, when you take 'em off fer the races. An' Henry. 'Nother thing. When you run with 'em harriers, fasten two curry combs on to the bottoms o' your boots an' kick out real smart, so's ter send the dust up inter their eyes an' confuse 'em.' "

"Hor—hor—hor!" from old Sid.

"Wa-al, sir, Henry he put that inter his pipe an' smoked it fer nigh on a week 'for he made up his mind

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that it wouldn't exactly try on. Henry," remarked Joe thoughtfully, "is a leetle, jest a *leetle* defeecient in his roofin'."

The Country Store is painted now. It has plate glass windows, and it is many years since the vivid dishes and match safe of Indian-cherub renown have been seen. Inside are hardwood floors and long counters and more room and less comfort. Everything is on exhibition, for "aloft" has been converted into a flat from whence instrumental dissonances issue. Nowadays, people come to buy and having bought are expected to go away again. There are no chairs about the coal heater. No Joe or old Sid in sight. One does not readily associate debates and stories with the place as it is. The progress of events has installed many an improvement. What was and what is, gauged at their relative values, needs no one to point the moral. And yet, with the passing of the Country Store, we have left behind a wholesome condition of life that will not return, a landmark that typifies, none better, the youth of our nation, even as its successor does its maturity.

3.

Canadian Folk Lore

Canadian Folk Lore

THERE comes a time in the history of every nation when it awakens to the fact that in its folk-lore, with every decade passing more and more into oblivion, it has a precious endowment. Conditions of life that in our grandmother's time were regarded as commonplace have for us a piquant charm. Things that they thought almost too trivial for repetition ("It was the way we did in those days") give us an insight into the character and fortitude of our ancestors, a composite picture of the pioneer days, valuable beyond all intrinsic significance of the facts themselves.

They, in their turn, had tales that had "come down," told them by their mothers, or it might be their grandmothers, as they sat at their spinning wheels of a summer's evening. Prime favorite among these with us children was one called "The Spy Story." After Wolfe's victory on the Plains of Abraham there followed, it seemed, many and terrible border disturbances. During one of these urgent need arose to get an important message through from one frontier post to another. Twelve men, among them one James Howe, volunteered to form the *posse* necessary to insure its

SPINNING WHEELS *and* HOMESPUN

safe arrival. The message was duly written, concealed between the lining and leather of one of the men's boots, and the little company set forth. It was a beautiful day in early fall. The forest, covering the land as the grass now covers a field, was painted with autumn colors. Birds carolled in the tree-tops. The brooks sang upon their way. It was good to be there, good to be young, above everything good to be alive. So that when, along toward nightfall, they fell in with a party of French who, like themselves, were in ignorance as to how matters stood at Quebec, they fought for their liberty as men will ever fight for what is as dear as life itself. Fought and were overpowered. Then ensued a mock at court-martial, cruel in its wanton injustice; they were accused of being spies, were condemned to be shot at daybreak. Of the passage of the hours of that night there is no record. But, to men of their calibre and spirit, it must have been humiliating beyond words to be so trapped, so accused, so powerless to perform their duty. For if they died as spies it meant that many more must die as victims, in consequence of their failure to fulfil their mission. Their honor, too, was involved. To die at his country's behest a man was ever ready. But as a *spy*!

Haggard, rebellious, desperate, they were marched out into the morning freshness, pulsating with life and hope—they who were without hope and would soon be without life.

CANADIAN FOLK LORE

Then James Howe spoke. They were innocent men. He stated the fact briefly and without feeling. They were innocent men unjustly sentenced, and he should like to prove it, if they would humor him so far. And then he told them how. As he proceeded the bored expressions on the faces of the soldiers gave place to those of attention, of interest. And when he had quite finished they sent for the officer in charge. They were not over anxious to perform their rather disagreeable duty, they relished a little sport, more than either, perhaps, they were very superstitious. The officer came. What did all this mean! Why hadn't the men been shot as he ordered? *Par Dieu!* Was this the way he was obeyed! James Howe saluted, excused the men, and, upon receiving an ungracious permission to speak, continued.

"Capitaine", he said, "it's this way. We cannot prove to you that we are not spies. You cannot run the risk of letting us go. I propose that we leave it to a Higher Power. I propose that you line these men up with me at the top, behead me, and as many as, headless, I run past you shall pardon—shooting the rest as spies."

The Captain considered, consulted with his officers, finally agreed.

"It is a unique way of severing the Gordian-knot," he observed, "and one that will do you, my friend, but

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little good if it succeeds. That," and he smiled incredulously, "is very unlikely. However, I cannot but admire your ingenuity, your spirit, and—"

"You will pardon them when I succeed?"

"I will pardon them *if* you succeed."

And so they make ready. And perhaps to James Howe life never seemed quite so sweet or worth the living. Perhaps he thought of home and home faces and little unfinished things that would always *be* unfinished now. Perhaps of his General, and his trust, and the friends whose lives were solely in his keeping—there was little enough time for thought of any kind. It was all done just as he said. The eleven men were drawn up in line, not too close. He was placed at their head. The order was given. The bright steel flashed and fell. And in a little hollow a group of men crowded about a figure that lay half buried among the ferns and grasses, its foot drawn well up—beyond the point where the last of the line had been.

Hardly less interesting, in its way, is the story my grandmother used often and often to tell of her experience in "those good old times" before lucifers had ever been thought of. The family, so runs the story, had all gone to attend a funeral several miles away, leaving my grandmother then a little girl ten years old, in charge of the house and of the seven month's old baby. She had also been provided with

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some patchwork and told, as an incentive to industry, that if she finished her "stint," and all went well, they would have the quilting bee on next Tuesday week.

As the slow-stepping oxen moved away, her mother turned back with the parting injunction, "Now Mary Car'line mind you take good care of Leafy Jane, and *don't let the fire go out.*"

For those were the days of flint, steel and tinder-box, and to let the fire go out was a serious affair. All of which my grandmother knew well. And yet, in her anxiety to finish her stint while it was yet light, she forgot all else—and the fire went out. It was in vain that she poked dry pine shavings in among the coals. In vain that she expended all her skill upon the flint and steel. Not a spark was forthcoming. Night would come. Her family would return. No supper would be ready for them. They would know her iniquity. They would know that she had let the fire go out.

She must go to her uncle's across the river and borrow some coals from him. She laid away her sewing, hung the kettle on the crane ready for her return, fetched the coal shovel, closed in those days like a box, and then her eye fell on Leafy Jane, asleep in her trundle bed. She could not go and leave her behind. Something might happen to her. She must take her with her. So with the heavy baby in one arm and the iron shovel in the other she started out upon her two

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mile walk. She was not afraid to go alone because many of the trees had been felled, making an opening through the wood, and no wolves had been heard of in those parts for several weeks. If she hurried she might get home before her family, and all yet would be well. But she had reckoned without the spring freshets. When she came to the river the bridge was gone, swept away, and only the "stringers" spanned the black flood. What could she do! Go back without her coals? Never! And yet, and yet, with the iron shovel—and Leafy Jane. But then children, as well as men, did not hesitate long when confronted with alternatives.

Clasping the sleeping baby firmly and the shovel hardly less so, she squatted down on the stringers, dragging her feet in the cold water, and hitched herself along. It was slow work, because she must go carefully. It took all her will power to keep from growing giddy at the sight of the swirling water below. But she was no coward. And she must have those coals. Inch by inch she wormed her way along. And now she was in the middle, water all around her, the clamor of it in her ears, the fear of it in her heart. And now she was nearing the other side. And now she was over. Never had solid land seemed so good before. But she must hurry. Must run. Already the birds had stopped their singing. Already the silence of night had fallen. The trees, as she flew by, blurred, melted

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one into the other, gave place at last to the little clearing round her uncle's cabin. A light showed through the window and when, panting, she stood upon the threshold, she saw coals glowing under the great log in the open fire place, and her grandfather, an old man of ninety, dozing in the chimney corner. For from here, too, all had gone to the funeral. Swearing her grandfather to secrecy, she told her errand, but did not mention the bridge being down, knowing well that, old and infirm though he was, had he known that he would have insisted upon going with her. As it was she was soon speeding back through the woods toward the river. But notwithstanding her haste it was almost dark when she reached it. In the gathering murk the other side seemed farther away, the stringers more fragile, the racing stream more terrifying. Also the baby was as lead on her arm, and it was now imperative to hold the shovel well above all possible contact with the water. Could she do it? She started out bravely, praying, as our ancestors were wont to pray in their everyday extremities.

Slowly—so slowly that she hardly saw that she moved, carefully—so carefully that her tortured arms seemed ready to break with their burden, surely—as surely as the bank behind fell back, and the one in front crawled forward—she worked her way across. The roar of the water, cruel, menacing, thirstful, would

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always be in her ears. Darkness such as this forever over her. Pain that must be fought and not for a moment given in to, her portion till the end of time.

When, something less than two hours later, the family, tired and hungry and cold, entered the door of their small home a royal blaze was crackling on the hearth. The "spare-rib," swinging from its wire, was sending forth savory odors. The table spread with brown bread and cider apple sauce. The baby crowing on her trundle bed.

"Well Mary Car'line," her mother greeted her, "have you finished your stint?"

"No, M'm," said Mary Car'line.

Her mother regarded her reproachfully.

"But then," she said, relenting, "You have taken good care of Leafy Jane, and you didn't let the fire go out."

Not until long afterward, not until her mother was one day getting out the patchwork quilt for part of her wedding dowry, in fact, did my grandmother reveal the history of that night, in the days when one did not lightly let the fire go out.

4.

Early Spring *in the* Woods

Early Spring *in the* Woods

ONE stormy day in February you had occasion to go into the back shed chamber, where old magazines are stored. Raising the curtain that kept the room in darkness befitting the repository of the defunct, you looked out. The sloping ice-house roof, frosted a foot thick with snow, ran down to a level with the moving heads of three men and a half grown boy. They had a machine for cutting logs, and moved to and fro getting them into the proper juxtaposition to be cut into stove wood length. At one end hovered the boy, intermittently pouring the contents of a pail into the receptive part of the machine. At the other end two men manipulated the logs. A pace behind, the third got out still others. And always the whir of machinery went on, and the saw-shaped thing in the middle moved quickly through the growth representative of many years. It was fascinating to watch, sitting there on the trunk filled with yellowing letters, and surrounded by old *Godey's Lady's Books*, and *Grips*, and *Harper's Weeklies*. The lake that is so near you cannot see. The big barn is wiped out. But the oblit-

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erating curtain of the blizzard serves but the more effectually to italicise the lumber scene.

It was quite all of a month later that you passed the sawed and split piles of stove wood, on the way to the woods. The taste of spring was in the air. The sky Bermudian blue. The sheep that scurry away at your approach look big and shaggy, as yet unshorn of their heavy fleece. Everywhere blanched oat straws are pricking through the snow. The snow itself is of the coarse consistency known as muscovadoey. In little hollows, where it has gone, the ground is wet and soggy and yields ever so little underfoot. But the woods do not look especially inviting. What of interest is it possible to see there upon a day in early spring? It has been beautiful with white, ermine-bowed branches. It will again be beautiful with the growing wonder of leaves and spring flowers. But now.

Your fears seem not ungrounded. Far from being mica-dusted, the snow has the compressed look following hard on a thaw and freeze-up. The rabbit tracks are obviously too old to evoke speculations about overtaking the maker of them. The main business is getting within the guard of many tiers of branches. You are given an uncanny start by coming suddenly upon fallen away cakes of snowed over ice, revealing the black water of a putrescent pool. The undergrowth closes in. Every now and again the snowed over ice

EARLY SPRING *in the* WOODS

under your feet cracks, gives way, lets you down many inches with unpleasant abruptness. You wonder why you don't turn back.

Until now rabbit tracks and the fine imprint that puzzled you—beginning and ending as it did in the unbroken surface—till a raucous caw overhead revealed the swart tracer of hieroglyphics, have been the only trails you have crossed. But all at once the snow ahead has been trampled by many feet, and congealed by the thaw-frost process. A brush-pile of evergreens looms near in a clearing. Chips yellow the snow round stumps that only lately were trees. A broken road winds outward. In the air is the resinous smell of new timber. And by some subconscious association there flashed before you a storm-swept yard, three men and a half-grown boy, and a hoisted log, dropping into stove-wood length.

Following the road, you presently come out on intervale lands, stretching away to the river and foothills. A familiar view seen from a different perspective. Making a wide detour, in order to see at closer range the miniature forest of dogwood, brave in their scarlet spring livery, you wander in and out along new growth ways, aimless, yet with unformulated design of emerging eventually upon the lake.

The air is an elixir. In the distance crows answer one another in antiphonal chant. It is beyond words good to be there.

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Round many of the tree trunks the snow, in giving way, has left a raised dais. Ordinary enough to look at from above. But lying supine and peering between the serrated edges, you see a wonder scene. The twin artists, thaw and frost, have chiseled fairy works of art in this pure white underworld. Crystal stalactites and stalagmites, interior perforated daises, patterned like exquisite Venetian lace, faultlessly etched geometrical shapes, disappearing vistas, luring your imagination all the way to fairyland. Yet, when you get up and go on, the simile in your mind is realistic enough. How often people you "come to know" have reserves of feeling and nobility of thought of which their conventional exterior gives no hint.

But psychological comparisons merge into the unalloyed bliss of walking right into a snowscape of sheer beauty. An outstanding army of chocolate-helmeted cat-tails are on guard at the entrance. But when the talismanic watch-word of your extreme desire has passed you through their serried ranks, you are in the painting. On all sides but one snowy aisles wind past myriad daised entrances to Aladdin wonders. The one side gives on the lake, framed by the snow-cowled mountains of the opposite shore. But the trees are what give the tonal atmosphere to the place. Such trees! Mighty girthed, with gnarled and twisted branches and great protruding roots, if one were a

EARLY SPRING *in the* WOODS

believer in the transmigration of souls what a company of mortals would one see here! As it is, a strange, eerie emanation from them obsesses you like the keening of wind over wastes of snow. Is there, you wonder, an arboraceous psychology, as well as the psychology of the crowd?

Once again you come back, when the scene is staged for the drama of sunset. A thought late, you hurry through the sheep-sheds, and the let-you-in-at-every-step snow of the meadow. Striking your old trail, you pass the familiar landmarks—the sinister pool, the big pine and evergreen brush-piles. At the end of the wood road the brassy ball of the sun is poised on Turkey Hill, as if ready for an undercut in some colossal game of golf. Too glaring, and hard, and crude—like a chromo, or a painting which needs to be toned down. But the afterglow, in the East, will be just at its best. You turn back.

After the glare the woods look strangely dark. Your footprints by the evergreen brush-pile, however, beckon you. Unconsciously you quicken your pace. It wouldn't do to miss the afterglow and, like the tide, it will not wait. By blanched heads of hardhack and flaming clumps of dogwood, now coming out into the open of intervale lands, again delving into the woods, the footprints of yesterday lead you. The hour, the place, the rush through, lend to the adventure the unreality of a dream.

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You recognize the raised daises, but do not stop. It is not alone that they have changed since last you saw them, but every person is a tribe, and the same ego seldom looks out. And something within you urges "Hurry! Hurry!" like the Red Queen in "Alice in Wonderland." And now you see ahead the ranks of chocolate-helmeted cat-tails. They have a welcoming look. They seem to say, "Courage; you are almost there." And through the trees, sure enough, filters opalescent light. All round you are the raised daises unchanged. Your footprints fade out on the crystalized snow. Nothing human remains. Once more you are in fairyland.

And you are "in time." The music of exquisite color is playing over sky and mountain. You come out on the lake and slip into the seat on the moss between two old trees, as you might slip into your chair at Grand Opera. How long you sit there, drinking in the beauty of it, you have no means of computing. Sometimes, turning, you see that the woods behind are afire with the sunset. Vaguely you think, "I ought to go." But still you sit there, a part of it. So much a part that when, in the distance, men's voices float in from somewhere in the outside world, "I hope no person is coming here!" you think, panicky, almost as if you did not belong to that genus yourself, almost as if you were in very truth a part of what you love.

5.

Old Academy Days

Old Academy Days

.....We suffer and we strive,
Not less nor more as men than boys.—THACKERAY.

MAETERLINCK says that the love inspired by the one who has brought only the smiles to our lips will not be the same as that felt for the one who has sometimes called forth our tears. And paradoxical though it sounds, it is true, though in the case of the old Academy the lachrymal drops were wrung from us by an arrantly-smoking chimney. For weeks the stove would conduct itself as every well-constructed stove should. Then some day when the wind was particularly penetrating, it would refuse to respond to public expectation and the best of maple cord wood, and smoke as if its one mission in life was to impede advance upon the highroad of learning. The windows were loose, too, and in winter fresh air was at a discount. Cool zephyrs played about our feet, and up and down our backs. But no one, as I remember, complained. We considered it all in the day's work. It was part of "school."

Another part was that we did not play at studying, then, we worked at it. Particularly was this true of the scholars known as the Hillerites. For these schooling

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was achieved amidst circumstances favorable only as they created the strength that is born of adversity. Fruit that drops into the lap is little esteemed, but that which must be climbed after is prized. There was something about their weekly drive down that vitalized education. One does not get up by lamplight and drive half a dozen miles on a sack-covered board over trackless roads in below zero weather, without developing an aptitude for economizing time and making it productive of advantageous results. They knew their dates and declensions and propositions far better than the villagers. At spellings down they shone. They were past-masters regarding wall-papering and cistern filling calculations, while algebraic nautical feats and the pleasures of the chase found them ever ready to engage. Their labor carried with it its own compensation. And during their hours of recreation they joyed in that indescribable after-school-is-out feeling of liberation, which is not in the gift of the "dark oak, stained glass, vellum scented" existence, because to be experienced it must be earned.

As opposed to the Hillerites were the Noonerites. These exponents of Mark Tapleyism lived on the outskirts of the village, near enough to go home nights, but not for the mid-day meal. They formed a little clique of their own, and their creed might be said to be contained in the postulate that to be happy but dem-

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onstrates the livableness of life. In other words they believed in having a good time. While the rest of us were scurrying home to be present at our respective boards, leisurely the Noonerites drew forth capacious baskets, and sat round the stove or on top of desks, decapitating hard-boiled eggs, making way with huge triangles of cake, and contracting bets as to who could dispose of the greatest number of sandwiches and pickles in the shortest given time. These preliminaries over, they divested themselves of crumbs, pushed back the chairs, and started in to "raise Cain." And if Cain was not raised, to their credit be it said that it was not for lack of ingenious escapades. These occasioned the coinage of a new word, in fact, and Nooneritic became the synonym for all that was delightful, and daring, and out of the ordinary, and full of "go."

But their anecdotal proclivities were what won them the adulation of such villagers and Hillerites as elected to join their ranks. No racier stories were ever told than those that circulated about the old stove in the corner as an accompaniment to driving blizzards without and basket luncheons within. Sometimes amateur theatricals were installed, or pantomines taking off current happenings and the idiocyncrasies of village worthies, with the clear sighted abandon and histrionic skill of youth. Sometimes, when elections were imminent, a miniature game of politics kept pace with

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Parliamentary doings at large. To be neither one thing nor the other, to be—in the vernacular of the times—a fence-straddler, was a pusillanimity of which few were culpable. In reality one was either a “staunch Liberal,” or a “rabid Conservative,” according to paternal conviction at home. But that was hardly the impression conveyed. No. Each had the air of having arrived at his present opinion solely as the result of individual investigation into the *status quo* of the body politic. Not infrequently the Noonerites of the sterner sex had recourse to pugilistic sets-to in their zeal of partisanship for leaders on “our side.” While among the girls the popular mode of glorifying or heaping contumely upon the aspirants for political honors, was penning poetic effusions, and reading them aloud to appreciative audiences.

Rehearsal for Friday night debates was the prime amusement, however. Upon these occasions no subject was too abstruse or advanced to abash embryonic oratorical genius. Doctrines that Kant and Spinoza approached with circumspection they discoursed upon with the easy familiarity born of a fortnight's predatory perusal of encyclopaedias. Problems to which Tolstoi and his disciples have given years of painstaking research they dismissed with an epigram. Sentiments verging upon Shawese flowed copiously from the guileless lips of those who knew not the rudiments of Socialism and the Life Force.

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And in the seats, inadequately lighted by odoriferous kerosene lamps, the fond relatives listened to the rhetorical flights of their progeny with ill-concealed pride in "My Bennie's," or "Our Sadie's" obvious "larning." Once, when "Resolved that money is the root of all evil" should have had Scriptural indorsement by the citation of the camel and the eye of the needle and the rich man episode, the citator became so hopelessly confused as to the relative destinations of man and beast that a scandalized Church warden had to assist at his disentanglement. And another time, when "Heredity *versus* Environment" was being treated on a romantic rather than on a scientific basis, embarrassment arose from the debaters on both sides having rounded off their perorations with "For the hand that rocks the cradle is the hand that rules the world." The spirit did not move any of them to extemporize new finales, and as one after another ruefully led up to the inevitable exemplary declaration, it was too much for the incorrigibles in the seats, and they joined in, finishing the couplet in cheerful unison most detrimental to its *empressement*.

But all these pleasant excitements, enlivening our Academic activities, were dwarfed in importance by the Inspector's visit. We enjoyed it—or the reverse—in anticipation long before we did in reality. During recess and noon interregnums we stood in a ring about

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the stove and recounted, for the encouragement of the latest Hillerites, tales of the austerities and *bon mots* of the terrible one that we had not allowed to grow less thrillsome with the passage of the years. And while the more timorous quaked in their square-toed boots, "But whatever else you do or do not do," we were wont to conclude these depressing reminiscences, "don't let him see you are afraid of him." And as they looked dubious, "Be cheerful," we enjoined them. "Sort of unconscious, you know. Seem glad to see him, *and laugh at all his jokes.*" Carried out judiciously and in moderation this excellent advice might have achieved its end. But some nervous Hillerite was always sure to allow his appreciation to manifest itself inopportunely—thereby bringing upon himself the wrath of the humorist who, like Mark Twain, occasionally preferred to be taken seriously.

Sometimes, he proclaimed the date and hour of his visitation weeks ahead. Sometimes, he would descend without a moment's warning, his rotund person shaking with malicious glee at the consternated glances his advent provoked. Upon such occasions he was usually in high feather, his racy Scotch humor expending itself upon everything, everybody, until noon, when he gave us a half holiday. There was one peculiarity about this Inspector; whatever you expected he would be like, whatever things you thought to be examined

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in, that he was certain *not* to be, those things, of all others, were never broached. One year he would come with a species of lecture upon self-control, which you were supposed to imbibe and return to him as best you could, in response to trip questions. The next the mania would be all for sentences. Round and round the room. And the longer the sentences, the more havings, and wheres, and whiches there were, the more involved and parenthetic the mazes of Henry James-like ambiguities—the better pleased was that Inspector with our flow of language.

Hamlet with Hamlet left out could not be more unimaginable than the old Academy without its *genius loci*, our Principal. What others only taught, *he* lived. And he expected so much of us. Often we entertained secret qualms lest the mental qualities to which he so confidently appealed were lacking in our make-up, and in our endeavour not to disappoint his faith in us we quite surpassed ourselves. Not more than once did those who had “loafed when they should have been working, who sloped when they should have been straight,” care to face in his presence the ordeal of June. For to fail oneself was to make *him* fail. And pervading the silence of tense perusal of fateful sheets, might have been sensed a grim determination to make that old Academy rank up with the best.

But examination days are never typical days. Our

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room looked strange and unfamiliar denuded of its maps and text books, and with a perambulating deputy-examiner about. We like better to remember it upon Friday afternoons when our Principal read aloud from the classics. Up and down behind his desk he walked, one hand holding the worn leather volume, the other unconsciously lending emphasis to the beautifully cadenced words. And as he read, little by little, the boys in the back seats forgot surreptitiously to "twist wrists," send epistolary aeroplanes whizzing through the air, carve their names on their desks, or fidget for the downstairs rush out into the keen, frosty air. Little by little the early twilight crept into the room, blurring the violently colored countries upon the walls, obliterating corners, making the room very still save for the musical voice and the steady tap-tapping of the snow against windows. Down far-away crossroads bobsledges were coming after the Hillerites. A night of storm, and stress, and driven snow was setting in. But from behind our piles of strapped books we saw only pageant after pageant sweep through the darkening room, knew only that we were living again the glory that was Greece, and the grandeur that was Rome.

6.

Sap Days *in the* Bush

Sap Days *in the* Bush

ONE cold morning in late winter I was coming back into Canada before daybreak. Gradually the snowscape lightened. The stars grew dim. Frosted hills looked benignly down. Silver rivers wound ghostily away toward the dawn. "Faster and more fast o'er night's brim, day boils at last; boils pure gold, o'er the cloud-cup's rim." And in the gold and ruddy glow, framed as in a picture, was a little unpainted sugar-house, sitting sedately among the gray-liveried maples.

There comes, inevitably, a morning when one is impelled to rise early while the crust still holds, and let oneself out into a world made over new. There is a certain intoxication in striding across the wide, raised, dazzling expanse of snow, blue-white under the morning sky, with the sun just lifting itself above the snow-embossed hills, and the deep-breathing hush in the woods, as you enter, broken only now and again by the hoarse, guttural notes of the first crow. The spruces look not unlike drooping dryads under their jewelled ermine mantles, rabbit tracks zigzag away in different directions, losing themselves in the depths

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of the wood; the air, as you drink it in, goes to your head like wine. Then, somewhere from the slope above, a faint metallic sound floats down to you. You stop in your tracks and listen, holding your breath. Again it comes, louder this time and commingled with voices, only half-distinguishable. Unconsciously you look at the big-girthed, clean-limbed patriarch at your side. Soon it, too, must yield up its heart's blood, for a run of sap has been anticipated, and they are tapping the maples.

The Aborigines, we are told, on the approach of spring hacked the maples with their tomahawks and inserted wooden chips, which conveyed the sap into birch bark receptacles which, in their turn, were emptied into earthen kettles. The axe in course of time was supplanted by the auger, and the kettle by the evaporator, but, notwithstanding all modern improvements, sugaring involves a good deal of work.

There is a quaint old Indian legend, according to which the Redman is held responsible for the manifold labors attendant upon the sugar-making industry. Once upon a time—so runs the legend—syrup flowed from the trees thick and delectable for all who took but the trouble to gather it. But one day it occurred to Manabush, an Indian chief, that if his people did not work they would get lazy. And so he “climbed to the tip-top of one of the maples and scattered water



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all over it like rain, that the sugar should dissolve and flow over the trees in the form of sap. This is why the uncles of Manabush and their descendants always have to work hard when they want to make sugar. Wood must be cut, vessels must be made, and the sap that is collected must be boiled for a long time."

This is only a myth, but, like many such, contains a kernel of truth. To attain good results in anything there must be an expenditure of time and labor. The time falls appositely in the slack season in March and April, after the ice has been cut and before the farmer's spring work begins.

The importance of the maple industry can be estimated by the fact that a year's cash value amounts to \$2,000,000, and upwards of 55,000 persons engage in it every spring. In Canada the sugar bushes or orchards, as they are variously called, occupy chiefly the south-eastern section of the Province of Quebec, although the industry is carried on also in Ontario, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. A recognized and lucrative industry, there is a certain glamour over it as well. It is the call of the woods, perhaps, or of a recurrent season, sensed in the blue-enamelled sky and green-liveried firs and headier elixir of the air. When crows come prospecting northward, and the ragged quilt of snow is beginning to slip from the foothills, the preliminary step of boring the trees—on their south side preferably—is undertaken. After this rite has been

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duly performed, sap-spouts are inserted and tin buckets placed beneath them to catch the sap which, on an average, falls at the rate of some seventy drops a minute.

There is only a very small percentage of sugar in sap as it flows from the maple, so that it takes nearly thirty-two gallons to make one gallon of syrup. Half a gallon of syrup per tree is regarded as a fairly good run. Just as from fifty to one hundred tappable trees per acre is the size of the average farmer's orchard. Experience has proved that the best type of hard maple for sugar purposes is the one with ample roots, a broad-spreading top and a long trunk to act as Nature's storage tank for the sap. The expediency of building the sugar houses on sloping locations is readily understood when one sees that it enables the gathering tank to empty its sap by gravitation into the storage tank, and from there into the evaporator. But methods vary in different localities. During the "run" men and boys are kept steadily engaged collecting sap in milk cans drawn on a sledge or in a herculean, horse-drawn receptacle and emptying it into the storage tank outside the sugar-house. From this it is passed into the evaporator—a heavily tinned and corrugated pan, which facilitates rapid evaporation—and flows through automatically-regulated feeders, thickening, till it is drawn off in the consistency of syrup, at 219 degrees Fahrenheit, every ten or fifteen minutes.

SAP DAYS *in the* BUSH

While syrup can be canned either hot or cold, the latter is the safer method, since, when it is put up at a high temperature, the fluid is apt to shrink as it cools, thus creating a vacuum, which causes fermentation. Sugar makers realize from one to two dollars on a gallon can of syrup, the price changing as the season's run is a good or bad one, or as the quality of the article itself determines. Syrup and sugar made from the first or "robin run" are superior to that found in either of the succeeding runs, known respectively as the "frog" and "bud."

Sugaring is regulated largely if not entirely by the season. "It seems," so John Burroughs sums up the psychology of the phenomenon, "a kind of seesaw, as if the sun drew the sap up and the frost drew it down, and an excess of either stops the flow. Before the sun has power to unlock the frost there is no sap, and after the frost has lost its power to lock up again the work of the sun there is no sap. But when it freezes soundly at night, with a bright warm sun the next day, wind in the west and no sign of a storm, the veins of the maples fairly thrill."

In many minds sugaring and sugar parties are synonymous terms. For proprietors of maple orchards have the reputation of being most hospitable, and everyone for miles around has a standing invitation to drop in about sugaring-off time. In sleighs and buck-

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boards and on foot the sweet-toothed visitants come, up—up to the little unpainted shanties in the folds of the hills. Here savory odors greet them. They watch the stir and bustle about the shanty, are initiated into the intricacies of the evaporator and the modern process of boiling down by the foreman, congregate about pans and tubs of snow ribboned round with golden wax. Prodded by the wooden forks, especially made for the occasion, the velvety, chilled confection comes up rich, sweet, indescribable. At no other season of the year except Christmas is there such unrestrained jollity and good cheer. So impressed was one native of the Emerald Isle with the attractions of this Canadian industry that he delivered himself of the solecism that he thought seriously of following it the year round.

Long after recourse to pickles has failed to resuscitate flagging appetites, the sugarers linger on—till the sun drops behind the distant peaks, and the herded trees “commune and have deep thoughts, a secret they assemble to discuss. . . .” unintelligible to humans.

All too soon there comes a day when the crust gives under foot, and the sun seems almost hot, and little moats of water ring the base of the trees; a day when the sap moves sluggishly through the cells, and each twig and branch, distended and pinky-grey with bursting buds, herald their forth-coming mist of green—the day when sugaring is over.

7.

The Humor of Election Time

The Humor of Election Time

HUMOR, as has been ubiquitously pointed out, is a very comprehensive if not elastic attribute, and one that masquerades under many disguises, and is subject to the mutability of time and place. Broadly speaking, it may be said to consist in those "concepts in which there is the subsumption of a double paradox." Professor Leacock, in a luminous, not to say witty, article in the University Magazine a few years ago, while admitting that the basis of humor was its incongruities, even disharmonies, alleged it to be closely allied with pathos. And election time humor is seldom wholly funny. Sometimes subtle and pervasive, sometimes of the knockdown, swash-buckling brand, there is usually a substratum of the quality to be found in the retort of the poverty stricken farmer, who, when told that a contest that had seemed imminent had been "arranged" by the powers that be, stared back at his informant in a slow, hopeless sort of way as he bleakly exclaimed, "I can't never pay fer them sap-buckets now."

Used as a weapon in "stumping the country," humor has for its *raison d'être* a truth to drive home,

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an injustice to demolish, something reprehensible, or it may be laudatory, to show up in party or candidate. Lincoln once said, when his propensity for "getting off" jokes was remarked upon: "I am not simply a story-teller, but story-telling as an emollient saves much friction and distress." It sometimes also leads to embarrassing situations. A case in point is that of the speaker who in accompanying his chief upon his electoral rounds, provided himself with a number of stories with which to enliven the citation of statistical generalities. One of these related how a certain man had occasion to partake of pot luck with a farmer, whose hospitality was only excelled by the inferior quality of the apple pie, which his wife somewhat tentatively set before him. He praised this terrible creation, however, extravagantly, expending upon it encomiums at which the astonished housewife could only gape. Some weeks later it chanced that he again took a meal at the same house, and this time the pastry was all that could be desired. But he preserved a complete silence, the excellencies of the apple pie, which again figured on the *menu*, eliciting not a word. As he was about to take his leave his mystified hostess drew him aside.

"I'd like to ask you something," she began, "I can't make head nor tail *of* it. When you was here before I had had awful luck with my pastry. It was almost everything that it shouldn't have been, an' nothing that it

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should. And yet you seemed to set great store by it. To-day, my pie was good, if I do say it, as shouldn't, an' you don't so much as turn your tongue over to call it middlin.' "

The man laughed.

"I'll tell you," he said. "That first pie was so all-fired bad it needed all the lies I could hand it. This one was good enough to stand on its own crust, as you might say. See?"

That was the story. And insomuch as the member in question—a most estimable but a very modest man—objected to winning votes by the approved method of bruiting his virtues abroad, while his opponent, who was in every sense just his reverse, was hampered by no such restrictive delicacy, and persisted in blatantly tooting his own horn, it was nothing if not applicable. It "took" so well with those who had been at a loss to account for the reticence and absence of it in the respective candidates, that Jackson—as we will call the man who conceived it—fell into the habit of producing it whenever his more cogent diction and ordered dialectics required the expedient of the personal tribute denied.

One night, when the meeting was about to adjourn everything having been said, several ladies entered and seemed so disappointed to learn that they were too late that the member said Mr. Jackson would add a few words for their benefit.

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"Give 'em the pie story," he whispered, his native modesty having become somewhat inured to its personal implication by its much repetition. Mr. Jackson accordingly arose, and summoning to his aid that air of ingenious spontaneity which is, perhaps, one of the politician's chief requisites, launched bravely out into the ancient tale, which he had been inspired, from time to time, to enrich from his own imagination. It provoked the usual risibility, one man in particular laughing, immoderately above all the rest. He was still laughing when he elbowed his way up to the platform some little time later.

"Pur-ty good yarn that o' yourn," he drawled, with a knowing wink, as if there existed a secret bond of understanding between them.

"Glad you liked it," said Jackson, rather shortly.

"To Mansonville, whaur I furst heard it," pursued the man imperturbably, "I sez, sez I, 'That thar are a mighty good side-splitter, an' that thar young feller tells it good, tu.' But humphing Mikel it warn't nawthin' to the way you worked it off to Sutton, nor yet to Brome Centre. An' to-night has them all beat holler—He-he-he!"

"Do you mean to say," interrupted the discomfited humorist, with a stereoscopic recollection of his various preambles in "working it off," "do you actually mean to tell me that you have followed me about just to hear. . . ."

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"How you'd cal'late to spring it on 'em neuw," cackled the man.

Since time immemorial, district school houses have been the rendezvous for the opposing parties, who hold their meetings, turn about, there. There is a story still told in Bolton, dating back perhaps fifty odd years, when might and right were apt to be synonymous terms, that gives the measure of the lively scenes enacted thereabouts in those days. For some ostensible reason, or for none, both factions wanted the little wooden school house on the hill the same night. After considerable manoeuvring of a more or less strenuous nature one side gained possession. The doors were locked, the windows barricaded, and the orator who was to hold forth upon that occasion had just, in the inflated phraseology of that time, "mounted the rostrum, thrown back his head, shined his eyes, and left the consequences to God," when, appalling to relate, the caucus of the faithful was most effectually broken up by the building being literally toppled over! The ousted ones had provided themselves with long poles and crowbars with which, at a preconcerted signal, they had accomplished this truly Sampsonian feat of bringing confusion upon their foes.

More conducive to future good fellowship and quite as efficacious was the more modern method by which a politician turned the tables upon his adversary as com-

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pletely as his progenitors of an earlier day had the house. Silencing the hisses with which his supporters endeavoured to put down a man who hoped by the process of what is known as "heckling" to break up the meeting, he cordially invited him to come up on the platform, and instigated upon the spot a joint meeting. The result was, that prepared for a different sort of warfare altogether, the agitator appeared at a disadvantage and was, indirectly, the means of securing the other a more complete victory than would otherwise have been his.

In one general election, where "feeling ran high," a rather amusing occurrence took place, illustrating the resourcefulness in expedients of which some of the lesser lights in the political arena are past masters. The "biggest guns" were in operation in places of more electorate importance, but one side—who might be designated as the Opportunists—had arranged to have a speaker of some pretensions out from the city. As primarily conceived the programme was that the meeting should be called for an hour a little previous to the arrival of the train on which the visiting speaker was expected. This would give the other side, or the Ultra-Opportunists, the first innings, and still allow their man ample time to make his speech and take the later train on to the meeting next in order. Now the speakers on the Ultra-Opportunist side were local men,

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whose strong point was not public speaking. They were aware of this, and their fertile brains devised the brilliant idea of instigating a regulation by which each speaker should be allowed to speak just as long as he wished—no time limit to be set. To this the unsuspecting Opportunists readily consented, tolerantly amused at the supposition that men of their meagre Ciceronian endowments required more time in which to express their views.

But Greek was to meet Greek. In that vicinity there lived a man, Silas Budd, of no great learning, but gifted with an unlimited flow of language. What he said, when duly considered, "didn't amount to shucks"—but he could keep going. Him the Ultra-Opportunists summoned to their aid, and so arranged that he was "set a-goïn' " a few minutes prior to the arrival of the afternoon train, which was to bring the hope of the other side. He proceeded to live up to his reputation, delivering himself of the long, involved sentences, which were so hard to follow, and meant so little when followed. In due time the stranger arrived and sat down to await his turn. Silas Budd meandered on, and still on. The stranger listened—at first courteously, then curiously, then with hardly-concealed impatience. Would the man ever stop? After a third surreptitious glance at his watch he leaned over to the chairman and wanted to know how long each was supposed to keep the floor, and looked a little reflective when told.

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"He must dry up soon, though," whispered back the chairman, with a black look at the guileless Budd, who showed no visible signs of doing anything so arid.

"As long as I have time to make my points," murmured the stranger, endeavouring not to look disturbed at this unusual procedure. "I'd hate to be obliged to cut anything out—and to me he looks as fresh as . . ."

"A daisy," sighed the chairman, mopping his brow. Silas Budd did.

The audience was beginning to grow restive. It is trying to give your attention to that which has no claim upon it; to follow ambiguities to find that they lead nowhere; to have it tacitly inferred that a joke is imminent, only to discover that no joke is forthcoming. For a little while it is funny, but its humorous proclivities are not of long duration. A man got up and tip-toed out. Another followed. The stranger tried to look unconcerned. Some of the leading Opportunists drew off and conferred together in whispers. Then one of them approached the chairman and rumbled an expostulatory something in his ear. He shrugged his inability to alter matters.

"You made the rule, you've got to abide by it," was all the consolation he could offer.

And always Silas Budd spoke on.

It was only the tried and true who heard him, finally, round off his peroration.

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They were to have their reward. Curtailed, perforce, the speech they had come so far and waited so long to hear, but—

"An' now I will address a few remarks to you in French," came like a shattering blow from the limber-tongued orator.

The audience was mostly English, and Silas Budd finished his "few remarks" to rows of empty benches, the stranger having been obliged to retire, in order to catch his train.

From the moment that the first dusty, grey ballot box, with its red "B. B." daubed in on the cover, has been unearthed from the long unused committee room, till "the last county has been heard from," and the victorious party are gathering in their might at the hotel to speechify and tell "how we won the fight," and the others are "streaking it for home"—the Townships afford the humorist a fertile field for observation of the idiosyncracies of human nature in the concrete. As a joke in the country is said to be practically imperishable, most of these observations eventually find themselves in print. But there is a something, smacking of the environment, that is incommunicable, and must be seen or heard in the local setting to be adequately appreciated.

That is perhaps why a nomination meeting is one of the most interesting of things to see, but one of the

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most tiresome to read about. The well-groomed speakers decorating the platform; the play of expression over the sea of faces as the magnetism of the orator welds many men into one man; the enthusiasm of those who "dew like a man as isn't afeared" to say just what he thinks, and their no less hearty contempt for the individual endowed with the unhappy faculty of getting everyone "edgewise as cats;" the strange types that drive in in stranger conveyances from nobody knows where; the representatives of ease and fashion, lolling in their carriages and motors; the self-constituted speaker within his hilarious circle, on the outskirts of the throng,—these all unite in producing a picture unique in its quasi-serious, quasi-comic possibilities. The remarks one hears are in themselves edifying. For an election crowd is not slow in perceiving any absurdity to which a speaker may inadvertently give utterance, nor has it any hesitancy about using it as a handle to turn against the other party. Staccato-quick comes the retort that raises the laugh provocative of deeper issues than would always on the surface appear. A city man, stumping his constituency, was once endeavouring to impress upon his hearers that he, too, was of bucolic origin.

"Why," he cried, as a happy simile came to him, "I was, as you might say, brought up between two rows of corn."

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"Reg'lar pumpkin, by heck!" drawled a voice from the crowd.

There is an old saying that if you wish to know your pedigree, from tip of root to blush of fruit, enter the political arena. Knowledge of more ulterior things are included. Among them a man learns how to govern men, and control circumstances; that "It is not enough to possess a truth, but that the truth must possess you;" that men are something more than their hope and their despair and their past deed, as their country, in Kipling parlance, is more than what it seems.

8.

Fresh Shining *After* Rain

Fresh Shining *After* Rain

THERE is, in the cycle of the seasons, an intermediate stage which is not winter nor yet spring, as the poets have sung it. Everywhere the earth is shaking off winter's mantle of snow. Meadows have a sodden, pressed look. Not yet do fall-ploughed fields suggest seedtime and crops. Marshlands are mouse-riddled. The firs are still sombre black. The skies are leaden. A yellow light over all. In the air a prescient sense of "something coming on the world."

And then above the foothills nimbus clouds gather and darken and over-spread the valleys. Trees begin to rock and twist. Hail, small and round like homeopathic pills, rebounds from windows and roofs. The air is white with it. The ground that has been a Zebraesque brown and white is white again with it. And now it is raining. Straight down. Hard. And it keeps on raining. All night you hear the windy voices of the rain croon, and threaten and weep. All day the woods are veiled with rain. It distills a magic tonic. It scours hillsides, muddies roads, swells rivers, floods intervale lands.

In oilskins and alone you sally forth to glory in

FRESH SHINING *after* RAIN

the waste of waters, where usually no water is. It is all on such a herculean scale, a symbol, as it were, that by struggle alone a man shall achieve. It is impossible to get very near, but beyond the inky pools and growing streams one sees extraneous objects—an uprooted tree, perhaps, or a bobbing barrel, or relic of furniture—floating past on the swirling current.

Following the river along, you cross the meadow where a stone war club and other evidences of Indian encampment—now reposing in the Brome County Historical Building—have been ploughed up. Indians must often and often have paddled up the creek and across Brome Lake on ruthless pillage bent. Almost you can hear the dip of their paddles, and see their lithe forms disappearing round the curve where dogwood blazes.

“Its very homelessness,” writes Richard Le Galliene of marshes, “is the home of something in man that is loneliest under a roof and finds its kindred only where the blue heron finds his.”

All round are pictures one need visit no gallery to see. Here, quasi-submerged trees loom greyly through the mist, looking like shades of themselves. There, so vivid green is the lichen on fallen logs that industrious fairies must just have painted them anew. All at once you are conscious that the murmur of rain has ceased in the woods, that the slow-falling drops no longer start

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innumerable circles on derelict pools. The landscape lightens. For the first time you notice a suspicion of greening leaves, the earnest of hepaticas and may-flowers to come. Surely the buds of the maples are pinky-green? And what is that? That raucous, insistent, triumphal sound overhead? And now one can see them—geese, flying North in V-shaped order.

Through the filter of the trees a streak of daffodil widens along the horizon. It flames, reddening the waters of the creek and all the little land-locked pools. Momentarily the gold and red becomes more translucent, the brown of the earth more sharply defined, the hills more mystically remote. Somewhere, up in the treetops, a robin bursts into song. How fresh everything looks, and smells, and is—fresh shining after rain.

9.

The Englishman in Canada

The Englishman in Canada

“**T**HE configuration of soil,” wrote Victor Hugo, “decides many of man’s actions.” It is a study not devoid of interest to see how it also determines man’s choice of a profession. In Montreal the erudite from transatlantic lands fraternize with and give new impetus to university circles. Principal Peterson was an Englishman. Many of the faculty at McGill hail from the Old Country. But let the average newly-arrived Britisher, with choice of profession as yet unmade, step inside a real estate agent’s office and incline his ear to seductive descriptions of Canadian farms, and, presto! whatever leanings he may have felt toward banking, or even a profession, vanish in thin air. When he is of age and of the right calibre this works out so as to leave little to be desired. But a diverse case in point occurs to the writer.

Two young Englishmen, innocent of the slightest knowledge of, or natural aptitude for, agriculture came to a village some seventy miles south of Montreal. They would not listen to the kindly counsels of an experienced farmer to invest in a small farm contiguous to railroads and neighbors. They did not take kindly

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to the idea of farming out until they learned the rudiments of the craft. Overlooking the village and commanding a superb view of the surrounding landscape towered a mountain. With the eagerness of those who wish to clinch a bargain before the other sees his mistake and revokes, they purchased a hundred and fifty acre farm. The owner, who, to his credit be it said, tried to divert them from their course, learned from chance snatches of conversation that they proposed subselling lots—reserving enough for a market garden from which they expected great things—to acquaintances from the Other Side. But “the best laid plans—.” September was well advanced. They could do nothing until spring. In the meantime they went out into the woods, with their new axes and modish leather gaiters, and perpetrated what they called “brushings.” The days grew shorter, the nights sharper. The mountain drew a mantle of deep purple about it, and looked down as from a great distance upon the nestling valley and gem-like lake. The maples flaunted a wealth of exotic colors, then stretched attenuated limbs to grey November skies, and creaked and groaned the dire tale of the transitoriness of all things.

The geese went South.

Chancing to meet the habitant, with whom the boys were staying until their house was built, the farmer asked how they were getting on. Dolphis, from his

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perch atop a load of hay shook his head and was slow in replying.

"What are they up to?" persisted the farmer. "Do they seem—er—contented? Are they still—what do they call it—brushing?"

Dolphis swore and spat upon the ground. At last he spoke.

"Ah, oui! dey brush! One leetle tam. Den de wind she blow, an' dey cam on de maison. 'Mon word!' dey say, 'but how she blow.' An' dey set dem down by de fire. Long tam dey set dere, head on de han'—so. An' nothin' do dey spake. I put questions into dem, begosh! but I tink dey no can hear. Onley dey set dere—so—head on de han'. Long tam dey set dere."

Not many days after, in the dusk preceding the first flurry of snow, one of the boys appeared. The gaiters were scratched and marred. His nice clothes had given place to an old sweater. Never, perhaps, was gnawing homesickness more eloquently personated. But a business understanding, making possible a passage in the first steamer bound for England, worked wonders in the resuscitation of spirits. This result, inevitable when one considers the immaturity of the parties concerned, and their total inability to correspond with their environment, is, so far as the writer's knowledge extends, an isolated case.

"What I like about your country here in the Town-

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ships," said one much-travelled Englishman, "is that it is so *near*. Your lakes, your mountains, your vistas of valley between, they are at your elbow. The West, it has its charm. The wide stretches of prairie, they cast their spell. But they are so far off! They escape you. You can never make them yours."

He was something of an artist, this Englishman, and before he left he had very tangible results to show how thoroughly he had made at least one part of the Townships his own, and, if we may be permitted the paradox, the world's.

The refrain of a "remittance man" of blue blood descent, who made Knowlton his home for a number of years, revolved round "England is all very well if you have a lot of money, but—" and the pause and significant shake of his head completed his sentence most graphically.

As a rule the Englishman in the Townships seldom dabbles in politics, and he almost never installs himself as instructor to aspiring youth. Except for those of stereoscopic bent who drift into the bank, farming offers the greatest inducements. This does not necessarily curtail the ingenious from engaging in side issues made possible by the demands of present day prosperity. A certain man—to cite but one of many varying incidents—"made well" by shipping several car-loads of young spruces to American cities for Christmas

trees. He paid a farmer, who was glad to get rid of the scrub from a back-wood's pasture, a cent and a half apiece for trees standing, and averaging from two to four inches in diameter at the butt end. After settling with the gang of men, who for three dollars per day cut the trees, bound the branches securely to the trunk with withes, drew them to the station, and loaded them in all their fragrant suggestiveness of the leading *rôle* each would play a few days hence in far-off city homes—there only remained freight charges and duties to be met. Upon reaching their destination they were put up at auction and sold for from seventy-five cents to five and even eight dollars apiece, thus realizing the shipper handsome profits.

Amusing enough are some of the foibles displayed by men whose knowledge of horticulture is mainly derived from books or hearsay.

"Fine row of beets you have there," I accosted a new neighbor, whose state of health made a return to the simple life imperative. He forsook the ungrateful task of poling some backward peas and came up to the fence.

"Great, aren't they," he assented, bestowing a glance of proud ownership upon the ornate red-purple and green mottled leaves. "You might hunt the country over and I doubt your finding as perfect a line of beet-roots."

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His wife who had joined us looked at them wistfully.

"And the tubers are real big, too," she said. Then, abruptly, with seeming irrelevance, "I suppose you have been having beets for as much as a week?"

"But not such beets as those," said I deprecatingly, "ours are only. . . ."

I saw her look at her husband significantly, as much as to say "I told you so."

"And don't you find that early beets are so much sweeter?" I pursued innocently. Again I caught that wistful look in her eyes.

"Well, really. . . ." she glanced at her husband and stopped.

He broke into the embarrassed laugh of one upon his defence.

"To tell the truth we haven't sampled them yet," he confessed shamefacedly. Then, seeing the blankness I could not entirely conceal, he hurried on, "you know I am a great one for symmetry, and, my word! I couldn't bear to spoil the row."

Time proved him to be a great one for many other things, as well. Having read in some agricultural journal of the crying need of every self-respecting man possessing his own pet compost-heap, he lost no time in repairing the lack.

"Oh, what has happened to your lawn!" I exclaimed

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in consternation one day, as I came upon a sun-baked, literally skinned square of ground.

With an air of good-natured tolerance he led me round to the vegetable garden. In the corner next to the rhubarb was the missing sod, neatly piled one on top of the other.

"Perhaps you are not aware," he observed kindly, "that sod, when it has rotted, makes the very best foundation for a compost-heap? Now in two years' time, with judicious watering, I will have a compost-heap that will be the envy of the community."

Englishmen of quite another type and caste find in the wooded districts and intervals fringing lakesides, preserves such as their sporting blood demands, and the slenderness of their purse is inadequate to supply in the land of their fathers. Through October and November the crack of their shotguns perforates the hushed expectancy heralding winter's approach. After a day so spent they return with game bags a-bulge with partridges, duck, sometimes a fox, and late in the season rabbits. For it is only the adventuious ones, who go up and penetrate into the fastnesses of the encircling mountains, who win the larger prizes, deer and bears.

"I see now," an Englishman once remarked, "why Canadians abroad think everything is so old. Over here everything is so *new*." Whether or no this newness, this youth, this glamor of El Dorado, is the sole

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factor in bringing about the ever increasing tide of immigration, it does not fall to the province of the present article to debate. That there is such an increasing tide statistics of the past bear witness, that the benefit derived from it will prove of mutual importance remains for future years to show.

10.

A Breaking-up Season Journey

A Breaking-up Season Journey

IT was snowing great soft flakes slantwise—snowing them viciously, as they might have been the missiles of a vast snowball fight—as we drew out of the K. . . . station. Here and there a house peered greyly at us as we rumbled by. Then, as the train slackened speed to cross the pile bridge, we in our turn peered at as much of the lake as rifts in the storm permitted. Near shore, patches of green ice and black stains that are pools of water, farther out swirling spiral wraiths, farther still illimitable white stretches. Again the train strained forward. And now you are in the woods. Rippleless water flows in broad, smooth channels, looking yellow where sunken ice is, inky black where it is not. The serrated flakes, falling, go out with an almost exclamatory abruptness. Only where the frost has pushed upward the sheeted ice, engirdling tree trunks like raised dais, it moulds wonderful shapes, and upon scattered brush-piles and old stumps and logs sifts softly, giving to the *tout ensemble* contrasting black and white effects.

Fields now. Ploughed fields, with furrows rilled by amber-colored water. Oat fields, with diminishing

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opaque oblongs, resembling herculean jelly fish left by outgoing tide on Maine beaches. Pastures, mouse-riddled, and intersected by rough corrugated "wood" roads running back to mapled slopes, above which bluish trails of smoke wind upward. Following these to their source, little unpainted houses can be descried through the leafless branches, and half way up the trunk of every sizable tree a tin bucket hangs suspended. The maples have been tapped, and in the unpainted houses their sap is being boiled down into maple syrup and sugar.

Presently you are *tête-a-tête* with an eminent judge. Suddenly he interrupts his travelling reminiscences, and leaning forward tells you to notice an outstanding barn just spinning into view.

"I never pass that barn," he observes, thoughtfully, "that I don't think of the lawsuit connected with it."

Then he tells it. Tells it so graphically that you *see* the unconscious family, eating their noonday meal, consternated by neighbors rushing in to say their barn is afire. Hear, when all is over, the devious stages by which they arrive at the conclusion that the conflagration has been caused by wind-blown spark from passing engine.

"And yet," reflected the judge, who had rendered judgment in their favor, "every time I see that barn it seems a long way for a spark to have been carried, and sometimes I wonder. . . . wonder. . . ."

A BREAKING-UP SEASON JOURNEY

It was several hours later that you climbed into the hotel bus. There was some delay about starting, waiting for mail that was late in being made up, and expostulatory murmurs arose. In voices indicative of caste and the absence of it, the masculine element pointed out the iniquity of making business men miss their connection, and commanded their Jehu to proceed. But ingrained habit was too strong. He sat stolid, impervious alike to entreaties and threats till the mail bags were duly stowed in their accustomed place, when the disgruntled passengers were rattled away to their overdue train. There at least there was no waiting. Rather nice just to step on and slide out. In a stationary train there is nothing to scatter your thoughts, but the instant you begin to move they are off, miles ahead, or it may be behind.

The window is beginning to frost, and it has turned colder and stopped snowing. A March wind is rising belligerently. The premature twilight fast darkening to night. A barnyard scene, a house, a tree, a windmill, no longer stand out like carved things. They blur. They disappear. Only the big things remain. The mountains loom large, imposing, real among the unreal, amid the transitory eternal. A river runs sombrely between swart evergreen fringe, runs swiftly, like the river in Mrs. Browning's poem, runs forever on. Lights, where no houses could be, glow fitfully. Sugar makers

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are still "at it," or perhaps sugar parties are in operation. But even as you look you perceive that it is not the distant lights you now see, but those reflected in the window from the artificial ones in the car behind. It has become quite dark.

"D— Junction. All change."

In the little station where the straight-backed seats follow the walls round with faithful precision, the news is circulating that, owing to washouts on the Line, the Montreal express is over two hours late. The intelligence is variously, characteristically received. An observant Swedish girl once remarked that "peoples as travels much puts not the glad on the face when they travels." And on this occasion they are the ones who accept the inevitable philosophically, and produce packs of cards, or recline somnolently, hats tilted over eyes, in corners. It is the obviously untravelled who pace the floor, inquisition every train man who comes in, and cannot see the expediency of trains going slowly when the country is flooded and every bridge a menace. But even their wrath simmers down to a morose apathy, and the flip of cards inside, and the shriek of the wind out have had time in which to become familiar sounds before an official, striding in, is deluged with queries as to the whereabouts of Nineteen. Nineteen, it appears, has just left R—, and Nineteen, all things considered, is reported to be making good time. An air

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of cheerfulness pervades the room. The conversation becomes general. It has run the gamut of freshet casualties and hazards when the official takes his turn.

"There was an old man aboard the other day," he begins, "a sick old man," he adds, scowling at the garnet and green globed lanterns ranged behind the coal stove. "For a great many years he had lived in Winnipeg, but he had always had hankerings, when his time should come, to go back to his old home in Boston to die. So when this sickness came on him he took his savings and bought a ticket, and with fifty dollars in his pocket and perhaps a little belief in human kindness in his heart, he started. But whoever made out his ticket blundered. According to railroad regulations he could not pass the Line on it. And so, at Newport, they sent him back. That is they sent him as far as Montreal."

The somnolents had straightened their hats and sat up, listening, the card-players had forgotten to deal, the itinerants to anathematize errant Nineteen. But at the official's last words the tension that might have been sensed in the air, lifted. One of the card-players gathered up the pack again with a laugh.

"Then they waived the regulations in his case? They let the old fellow go home?"

"The regulations were preserved," replied the official, picking his words carefully, "but as you say

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they had to let him go home, after all, for he died—in the Windsor Station, not in Boston,”

Minutes passed.

Faint and far up the South line Nineteen could be heard approaching, and the queue of passengers hurried out into the fresh air.

11.

Dominion Day *on the* St. Lawrence

Dominion Day *on the* St. Lawrence

EVERYTHING in life has its completing opposite. Winter has summer, land water, cities the country. Everything hooks on to something else. The St. Lawrence-Saguenay trip usually hooks on to Niagara Falls. To come to Niagara unhampered by an earlier first impression is as good as having Dickens happen all over again. To each his own vision. In Prospect Park a small boy assembles pennies by dodging among the spectators deftly polishing dust from boots and shoes with a scrap of chamois. To him Niagara spells opportunity. Presently a Mid-West couple approaches, hesitates, stops. What do they think of the Falls?

"Oh, we came for the children, and Mollie," indicating a fat girl in her early teens encamped on the grass near by, "she likes them fine. But Tom," nodding toward a stocky boy perhaps two years older scowling discontentedly round, "he wishes there were horses about."

A few minutes later, on the point, a joyous bridegroom informs you that he sees more *in* Niagara this time because his wife is with him. That she says the

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American Falls make her think of gelatine, and if you look at them in a certain sort of way you will see that they do give that effect.

Niagara, like Shakespeare, is every man's height, and he sees what he is constituted to see.

Although gelatinous resemblances are lost on you, and you may not pine for the equine, you like watching the weird, oil-skin garbed procession wending across frail bridges to and from the Cave of the Winds. Seen later from the Maid of the Mist, they look like knights scaling beetling cliffs to storm a beleaguered castle. And you have the satisfaction of knowing that your rubber-coated and capped crew, sprayed in turn by the American and Horseshoe Falls, look like a page out of Dante. You feel bathed in solemnity. Are conscious of a sudden evaporation of old doubts, while the conflict between idealism and realism merges into a Renaissance of high resolves.

The last of the afterglow finds you on the Clifton piazza. Slowly the rainbow cast by the sunset fades from the gigantic roller turning—night and day, year in and year out—its liquid avalanche. Bridge, cascades, river and Falls are illuminated with spaced glitter of lights.

One scintillating cluster above and to the right of the American Falls look like a golden ship—The Ship of Dreams. Spilling everything out of your mind, you

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sit looking at the Falls simply as Falls, not simmering them down to a simile or drawing analogies. In most lives recurrent periods come when imperative need is felt for something, someone greater than oneself. Niagara, to the seeker, must often have satisfied that craving through making him see the God in Nature. Maeterlinck compares the man who has never been happy with a traveller whose journeys have all been taken at night, and looking at the Imperial Cataract you realize the illuminating power of happiness as never before. At the magic touch of its rare beauty thoughts which have long lain in dormant solution come crystallizing out. In the rocker next yours sits a woman no longer young. She wears the burnt out look of one who has battled and learned how to live alone, is obviously one of the cushion-soled, reduced to the meagre fare of memories. From the Falls and floating Ship of Dreams her eyes lift to the rising moon and stars. If Niagara can feed the starved heart of her—it can do anything.

“The Toronto,” remarks a voice on your other side, “sails at three to-morrow afternoon.”

It is considerably after that hour that you see the skyline of the “City of Homes” diminishing in the distance. A fresh breeze fans Lake Ontario into little waves. The two inevitable gulls follow the boat. Through an open door comes a man’s voice calling

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numbers, and the jingling of state-room keys. You are elaborately indifferent to all this for you have no state-room. Acting upon an impulse to sail down the St. Lawrence on Dominion Day, you had accepted the too optimistic assurances of the clerk at the King Edward and the Purser at the wicket. The ticket the latter promised to hand you "after we get off" obviously went to the highest bidder. Too late you find yourself in a predicament not unlike that of the Ancient Mariner with respect to water: state-rooms, state-rooms everywhere—and not a berth for you. People often feel in the first shock of loss that they have gained something. You have a curiously free sensation, and gain some novel impressions otherwise missed.

Standing in line for meal tickets you exchange a few words with a Toronto girl, who "thought you were English from your accent," and a few more at dinner with a lone little lady from Georgian Bay. Later, on the upper deck, a mother and daughter draw their chairs alongside as the moon rises.

"We weren't so glad to see the moon in London," the mother subscribes.

"You were there during the war?"

The two exchange glances.

"We were very much there during the war." And she goes on to say that their locality was in the most raided section, one bomb striking a school and explod-

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ing in the basement, where the youngest children were—and many other things prefaced by “I saw. . . . I saw. . . .”

Presently music lures us in to watch the dancing, and when you emerge again the lights of Charlotte are drawing near. They draw nearer. “The Toronto” docks in front of an elevated bridge lighted above and below by garnet lights. These, with the illuminated waterfront and a full moon shining above “compose” a scene picturesque to a degree. “The Kingston” which has sailed after “The Toronto” comes abreast, is tugged under the bridge, which opens giant garnet-lit jaws, turned in the deeper water beyond, repasses with nearly empty decks and is soon out of sight.

“Why is ‘The Toronto’ waiting so long?” you ask two middle-aged women, whom you have previously likened to characters in “Friendship Village” who went away so that their own husbands and kitchens would look good to them when they came back.

“Something wrong with the engine. You can hear ‘em fixing it.”

Listening, a faint metallic sound issues from below—a sound you have subconsciously been hearing for some time.

“Will it make us very late?”

“We are an hour late as it is. Should have gone out before ‘The Kingston’.”

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"It seems so odd sitting up," you smile, stifling a yawn.

"Folks often do if the berths are taken—and they don't care for cots."

Cots—of course.

But when you saw them whitening the lower saloon, where not long before flappers had been tripping the light fantastic, and people getting into them dressed, while others look down amusedly at the performance from above—you retreat precipitately, and join the Friendshipeans on deck, now moonlight flooded. But you have had what a certain little girl once called "an elegant sufficiency" of moon, and are oh! so sleepy. Presently a bell boy is requisitioned to bring mattresses and spread them in the upper saloon under a great spreading palm. On these we ensconce ourselves, now and then peeking down through the railing at the cots below, looking as incongruous in their ornate setting as those in old *Chateaux*, in France, hastily improvised for the wounded coming in—coming in. Once a bell boy, passing, drew from one of the Friendshipeans a startled "Oh, Lord! There's lots of travelling to-night." And once the sound as of a thunder shower on the roof elicited from the other a sleepy, "We're off." Slipping out on deck you see that the suspended open jaws have already admitted "The Toronto" and that the tug is turning her around. The moon sloping

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toward the West looks cold and grey and like the lost visitant from another world. An uncanny light is over all. Shivering, you tiptoe back to the mattress. After awhile you sleep.

At Kingston there is a brief stop while wire baskets of fish—which later on are destined to be seen again in diminutive, fried sociability with other appetizing viands—are being transferred to the boat. Then ensues a period when the attention turns from the similarity of the shore line to the dissimilarity of the passengers. A discerning commentator of the habits of salmon on the Lower St. Lawrence once asseverated that large fish projected themselves higher than small ones, their powers of ascension being limited or augmented according to the depth of water from which they have sprung. The big fish on board convey by a *Je ne sais quoi* in their mien and atmosphere that they have sprung from deeper waters than the small fry cluttering the deck. But the small fry, after the manner of their kind, sport about in the shallows of trivialities, and fancy they are the whole shoal. One family in particular squeeze (if one may change the metaphoric gear) their orange long before it is ready to emit the golden drops of rarest enjoyment.

But not to admire anything is as poor a criterion of taste as to admire everything too much. One is reminded of the man who was disappointed in Rome—

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especially in St. Peter's—and lamented that even if he journeyed to Athens, Troy and Mount Sinai he would find there, too, only dust of desire. At Clayton, the gateway to the Thousand Islands, the melody or "air" of the river begins. You and other deckeans have supplied yourselves with booklets telling what and whose the islands are, but mostly the booklets are forgotten. They can be perused anywhere, anytime, but only here and now can you see the real thing, feel the glamor of its past and future condensed into the magic present.

You sail back into history and glide with La Salle "among these watery labyrinths, by rocky islets, where some lone pine towered like a mast against the sky; by sun-scorched crags, where brown lichens crisped in the parching glare; by deep dells, shady and cool, rich in rank ferns and spongy, dark green mosses; by still coves, where water-lilies lay like snow flakes on their broad flat leaves." Down—down toward the land of Jacques Cartier and Champlain, toward Quebec, where Frontenac ruled, and Wolfe fell and the First Contingent sailed for the Great War.

At Alexandra Bay there is an intermission while same passengers get off and others on. Then the pictorial music goes on. There is nothing martial about it. Nothing Niagara-minded. As island after island floats backward it evokes somewhat the same effect as hearing, one after another, the prologues to operas.

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Gondolesque boats glide in and out among the islands, giving a dreamy, Venetian charm. This villa is a feudal castle. On that island estate with its towers and gardens in four minutes you live a libretto through.

But the "air" changes at Prescott, where passengers also change to the "Rapids Queen." In a popular record of a few seasons ago, "Till We Meet Again," the music suddenly breaks out in song. The rapids in the St. Lawrence impress one like that. The hurrying river cannot at times restrain its joy and breaks out in rapids. First the Gallops, then, at intermittent periods Long Sault, Coteau, Cedar, Split Rock, Cascade and Lachine. Somewhere between them a big fish portentously likens the St. Lawrence "just here" to rivers in Alaska. And somewhere else a governess tells her charges that "Now we are in French Canada." Towns appear and recede. A score of children troop down to the river bank and wave flags—the only patriotic emblems we have seen this Dominion Day. Thanks to the delay at Charlotte, the sun is setting as the "Rapids Queen" navigates the Lachine Rapids. Setting gorgeously behind mountains of ever-changing colors, which are reflected in the rapids until the whole river is incarnadined. You sail into Montreal Harbor as to a *fanfare* of trumpets.

Here the afterglow is fading fast. You see Montreal and Mount Royal, sparkling with lights like a

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diamond tiara above the city. Slowly, noiselessly, you float in, lights multiplying before you on land and behind and around on other boats and river craft. It is so beautiful that it is an effort to leave the empty deck and manoeuvre a way through a Dominion Day crowd down stairs. It seems an interminable time before an exit can be effected, and you climb into one of the last of the waiting busses—drawn by horses!—and clatter off watching the moon you saw last at Charlotte play hide-and-seek with the tortuous side streets. It is almost eleven before you agglutinate yourself to the waiting queue before the desk at the Windsor. But a few minutes later you are in your favorite room eight floors up, as remote from all below as Hilda in her Roman tower.

Down in Dominion Square dwarfs are hurrying on their foolish, vital ways. Beyond myriads of roofs and steeples and electric signs winds the St. Lawrence, necklaced with bridge lights. And silhouetted against it looms the colossal dome of St. James' Cathedral, where the twelve disciples stand ever looking down upon the life, and crime, and love of the great city, as if they would urge those below to find the solution to their difficulties by—looking up.

12.

The Eastern Townships

The Eastern Townships

A LAND of upland farms and nestling villages; of mountain lakes and tranquil rivers; a new land and a prosperous; a wonder of green in summer, a glory of scarlet and tawny-gold in autumn—such are the Eastern Townships, or, as they are not inaptly called, “The Switzerland of Canada.”

When and how the former appellation—by which that portion of the Province of Quebec lying southeast of the St. Lawrence and including within its confines the Counties of Shefford, Brome, Missisquoi, Stanstead, Richmond, Drummond, Sherbrook, Compton, Megantic and Wolfe—originated, is variously ascribed, the most authentic version, perhaps, being that at the same time that several thousand United Empire Loyalists received grants of land from the government in Western Canada, or Ontario, at the close of the Revolutionary War in 1782, a few hundred families came to the townships of Eastern Canada, or Quebec, and their friends who remained in the United States acquired the habit of distinguishing the different settlements by calling the latter the *Eastern Townships*.

There are places that one wonders at, admires, has

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a *penchant* for and ends by—forgetting. But one does not forget the Eastern Townships. Time was when nine Canadians out of ten had never heard of them. Time was when the phrase, “He is a Townships’ man,” evoked but the image of a shrewd, robust, humorous type, whose propensity for “getting there” was rather astonishing to those whom necessity had never taught “success is but the science of obedience.” Time was when it was enough to know that Sherbrooke and Granby had proven self-sufficient reasons for existing, that Stanstead County was “the banner agricultural section of the Province,” that Brome, Missisquoi and Shefford, dairy and manufacturing centres. But “the old order changeth, yielding place to new.” North Hatley, Lake Memphremagog, Knowlton, are names to conjure with. Long before the flat country about Caughnawaga has climbed into the hills that ring with emerald that “sapphire dropped from fairy casket,” Brome Lake; before those loftier cones, Owl’s Head and Darkling Orford have challenged the prospective mountain climber; before even Eccles’ Hill, of Fenian Raid fame, has fired the patriotism of lovers of ancient lore—the spell has been cast. The scenic views are unsurpassed in charm by any in Canada—but it is not the views alone. The climate is good, and it is true that we like places for their weather much as we do people for their dispositions—but it is something

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more subtle than climate. Something, it is, which makes these Eastern Townships as much of a cult as were ever Ravello or Bagni di Lucca on the Other Side.

It is now a number of years since North Hatley, on beautiful Lake Massawippi, became a fashionable watering-place, frequented not only by Canadians but by Americans as well, who have wearied of the stereotyped pleasures of Newport and the Maine beaches. Big hotels with modern improvements, recreations of every shape and nature, and cottages which have sprung up over night as if by order of some slave of the lamp, all contribute their quota in making the *tout ensemble* one attractive to the most exacting of the tourist *genus*.

To spend a vacation at Bondville (named for Bishop Bond), on the Western arm of Brome Lake, is to pass into quite another world. Here Isaac Walton has many disciples, and the gentle art of angling is all the vogue. Camp fires of outing parties, on the points, often send their pencilled gleams and fragrant message out over the velvet darkness shrouding this side of the Lake.

At the southern extremity is Knowlton. Those who are satiated with what Arthur Symons calls the beauty of consciously beautiful things find here a simplicity, a harmony, which is almost musical in its appeal. All who are able come when the hillsides are blushing

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with their first Spring Beauties, and outstay the spectacular pageantry with which the maples banner their approaching eclipse.

There are few drives more typical, perhaps, than that which leaves Knowlton to wind through Bolton Pass over the same *route* traveled in the olden times by the heavy Concord coach. A trout brook plays hide-and-go-seek with the road much of the way. Quaint houses of the day-before-yesterday peer incuriously from their patch of clearing. A little square district school, recalling days when one was told to "speak up there, and don't read like a mouse in a cheese, and *mind your stops*," sits primly beside its wood-pile. Somewhere away in this waste of rock, and spruce and wind-fall of timber is a smuggler's cave. Many are the tales told of the lawless spirits who stowed their booty there. It was here, too, that a stranger from the States was frozen to death one winter, while attempting the then "foolhardy" and "perilous" journey to Stanstead on horseback. Here a Mr. Austin, returning from taking a load of salts to Montreal, had his encounter with the panther and put him to rout. But farther on, in Brome Woods, that an oat-field was destroyed by bears in a single night, and the standing shocks on an acre corn lot demolished by the same ruthless marauders.

It is but a step now, in the manner of speaking, to

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the famous Potton (sulphur) Springs, discovered in 1844, for the medical properties of whose waters each season people congregate "out of everywhere into here." And another step—a steep one—to Lake Memphremagog. Every year sees more of the farms along the water-front bought up and built upon by cottagers, whose return to the so-called simple life is here enhanced by all the health-giving and wholly delightful sports attendant upon combined water and mountain capabilities. Not to have climbed Owl's Head, or Orford, or Sugar Loaf, or Round Top, or The Pinnacle, is not to have seen the Eastern Townships. And how one sees it who does! From Orford (an eminence of 4,500 feet) the country stretches away in ever widening perspective, the patchwork of green and chocolate-colored farms veined here and there by rivers and toy-like trees, and gemmed by the flash of a score of lakes, till all climb once more into the magnificent range of interlapping peaks, through which, on a clear day, can be distinguished Mount Royal, the White Mountains of New Hampshire and the Green Mountains of Vermont. Owl's Head, rising abruptly 2,700 feet from the margin of the lake, is a shorter, steeper climb. From the height you look down upon the veritable woods through which those who know their Parkman will remember that Rodgers' rangers swept in 1759 on their way to "exterminate the brood

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of tigers" that had so long harried the homes of New England.

"To understand the national life of Canada," Mr. Creighton once wrote, "you must go among the habitants." It means going rather farther afield in these days when it is difficult to light upon a spot where someone is not staying or sojourning. But should the collector of first impressions scale that part of the Bolton range always alluded to as "The Mountain," and find himself in the vicinity of St. Etienne, he will be rewarded by the sight of habitants working in the fields in costumes as picturesque as he pleases, from the ornamental point of view. Should he engage in conversation with one of these, Drummond's name, sooner or later, is always sure to be mentioned. For they still like to tell of his visits among them, and how he "put questions into them, begosh!" when practising in Knowlton, early in his medical career.

These habitants prove efficient guides when strangers from other parts of Canada or the United States come to these woods to spend hunting or fishing vacations, or upon prospecting expeditions. For there is hardly a farm among these hills that has not its unworked copper, silver, or asbestos mine. Though sometimes the possessor is deceived and led into embarrassing situations, as was a man who presented himself one day at Dr. . . . 's office, in Montreal. He was of the

type ubiquitously known as "hayseed," but upon the assistant politely insinuating that the scientist's time was not at his disposal, he affirmed he carried that which would make him see *him*. A certain excitement, held in check, conveyed itself to the assistant, and after a brief parley with his chief, the stranger was shown into the sanctum. He looked about him stealthily, as if to be assured that they were quite alone, and produced from one of his capacious pockets a knobby parcel from which he proceeded to unpeel many thicknesses of paper. At last a flaming red handkerchief came to sight, and he spread the contents on the desk, and stood back with a gesture of triumph. What might the professor call that? He, the man, had a whole farm full of it. The professor stooped and examined specimen after specimen, then straightened and looked at the stranger, whose excitement was by this time almost uncontrollable.

"Iron pyrites," he announced, succinctly, and as the other's jaw dropped and he stared at him speechless, he repeated, vaguely conscious of some substratum of tragedy in the air, "Yes. Iron pyrites—only iron pyrites."

"Not gold," choked the man. Then, stonily, "An I jest married a widder with eight children, what owned the farm. I—I thought fur *sure* it wuz gold!"

"What delightful things inns and waiters and bag-

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men are!" Robert Louis Stevenson has exclaimed somewhere. And delightful the inns or boarding-houses of Eastern Canada certainly are. They are not necessarily always to be found in the vortex of fashion's seething activities, though when they are some of the nicest people are among their "come-and-come-againers." They are at their best, perhaps, when you must drive a mile or so out into the country between fields a-tangle with blowing daisies, clover, buttercups and Flora's paint brush—this last the *bête noir* of farmers—before you draw up at your destination, and are told by a beaming hostess that she is *real* glad to see you again, an' to come right in, you must be all tuckered out, an' my sakes alive but how you *have* growed! It is all very pleasant—even the last, fiction though it is, since your growing days are palpably over.

When you have "taken your ease at your inn," you sally forth. And here are fields where you can go a-berrying. Woods where there is still a sporting chance to bring back bags a-bulge with game. Brooks from which speckled trout can be lured to furnish fisherman's luck at picnic spreads on springy moss beneath latticework of dark green foliage. Here from some coign of vantage, looking off through the lilac haze of sunset at a darkening grandeur of scene, with a bell somewhere in the distance faintly ringing, you feel with Goethe that you "may say, paint, describe as

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you will, but here is more than all." For here, up among the hills, far away from city and "cuff-and-collar cult," and the strenuous life, you come to know the spell which *is* the Eastern Townships.

13.

Berrying Days

Berrying Days

SOMEONE, somewhere, calls berrying a sport and then goes on to say that it is, after all, just—berrying. To the initiated a more suggestive, a more talismanic name could hardly have been chosen. Berrying days are distinctive, apart from ordinary days. To begin with one is up, and “afoot and lighthearted has taken to the open road” before ever the brightening sun has risen above the horizon and set a thousand glancing gems asparkle on tree and flower and dew-drenched grass. Silence, full of ineffable meanings, is beginning to be broken by drowsy twitterings from leaf-screened nests. Above cloud pageantry gathers, and piles, and breaks in filmy billows against distant hills. Racy smells of earth and growing things come up to you. Gossamer cobwebs, spun across the moving green of the fields, presage perfect weather. Everything that you see is thrilling with life. Everything is yours to possess. And as you swing along through the rare June air it is borne in upon you that life is larger, better than you thought, and if you are so constituted that happiness in life means achievement, you will hail

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the first glimpse of the meadow where the strawberries grow with delight.

There is, inevitably, a snake fence to push your dishes (selected the night before with an eye to the advantage of handles, and of a size that can be squeezed into the crook of the left arm when that standstill stage, "nearly full," shall have been reached) under, and to clamber over, and a strip of marshy ground to be crossed, and—just as inevitably—the panicky moment when the horrid thought obtrudes, "What if they have ploughed up our field." But "they" never have, and the relief of finding the far reaches of thin grass still contending with that gay usurper, Flora's paint brush, makes the fact that water is sozzling back and forth in your boots at every step of small consequence. When strawberrying the first thing to be done is to pick out some landmark—a wide-spreading pine or charred stump—under which to stow your reserve dishes. This done you are ready to make a bee line for your old haunts, where the ground has the reputation of being "red." Before your "bottom is covered" and pyramidal mounds are beginning to creep up the sides, the grass has waved itself dry, and your peregrinations to and fro no longer leave a dull trail in your wake. A good picker needs not to be reminded of the inefficacy of rolling stones to gather moss, or that the quest for larger berries and redder places does not tend



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to fill yawning dishes. No. He finishes what he has begun, and has learned that here, as elsewhere, stooping for small often is the means of securing him large gains. For the best berries are not to be found in places where the grass is thin and the plants many, but in isolated nooks and ridges where vegetation is rank and only the hardiest can sustain a roothold. Here they grow large, juicy, fragrant, with a downy sheen on them not seen elsewhere.

Who was it who said that if asked to select a good situation for a house he would answer, "Choose a huckleberry patch?" The view from many an Eastern Township strawberry field might well prompt a similar remark. Wide open to the sky, and for the most part hemmed in by or climbing up over an amphitheatre of green hills, it is the exception where the prospect is not pleasing. Sometimes it is wood-magic that appeals, sometimes a trout brook, sometimes merely the undulating fold of velvet greenery, snowed under daisies that dance down, and down, and down, to where cool lake water, white flecked at the margin, laps the whispering rushes. "It reminds me of nothing so much as *Les Avants* in *Narcissus* time," one strawberry picker observed, as she set down the dish, which, despite valiant efforts, was "settling" in a distressing fashion, and revolved the cramped arm back and forth to rest it. "If the hills were a little higher, and the lake a

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little bigger, and the sky a little bluer, and the daisies were Narcissi, I could quite fancy myself back in 'The Upstairs Country' of Switzerland."

To go raspberrying with comfort one should be endowed with a well-developed bunch of locality. For in the Townships raspberries are found oftenest in what are called "slashes," in the woods, where the older timber has been cut down, and the new has not yet grown up to replace it. Here raspberry bushes run riot. And here, at one time or another, during the last weeks of July and the first of August, repair old and young, decked out in broad-brimmed hats, and provided with pails and baskets of sizes indicative of the anticipations and picking capacity of their possessor. There is more variety in raspberrying than there is in strawberrying. You can—indeed you must—roam about more. Up hill and down hill, in shade and out of shade, over moss-grown logs, round hollow stumps where hornet nests are not to be too heedlessly approached, waist deep in crackling brush-piles, where, for some occult reason, the berries, hanging above you, just ready to drop into your outstretched hand, are invariably thickest and largest, cool plunges through bushes and out into the bright sunshine once more, down by the green-mottled creek, where birds fly up from the tangle of coarse, yellow sedge grasses in shrill-voiced alarm, at your approach, and, when the sun has

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climbed overhead, back through the intricate mazes—where every path looks like every other, and where you may, firm intentions to the contrary notwithstanding, wander in a circle and find yourself exactly where you started out—to “The Old Landmark,” near which grey, gaunt, leafless wreck of a once magnificent butternut tree, visible from every part of the pasture, you are to have lunch. By the time you have deposited your pail under the perennial shelter afforded by a low-spreading evergreen, the hallooings, announcing the straggling return of the other members of your party, have given place to the crunching and snapping of underbrush close at hand, and one after another rubicund but cheerful countenance emerges from the bushes, and one after another voice demands “Let’s see yours,” while its owner presents his own dish for inspection, by way of exchange of courtesies.

No pleasure picnic, with elaborately packed hampers, ever was quite as good as those hasty lunches, eaten under “The Old Landmark.” If the butter was melted, and the sandwiches inclined to curl, and there were pine needles on the cake, and the water was far to go for, it was a detail. Such appetites! And everything tasted so good! The shade was so grateful, and the carpet of moss so soft to lie on, and the sougling of tree-tops, overhead, so musical, and the sweet notes of the Phœbe bird, answered from some distant part

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of the slash by the prolonged crescendo of the pewee, so essentially a part of it all. And yet, when you presently sally forth into the white sunlight once more, an empty pail on your arm, it is with renewed zest, and enthusiasm in no wise abated. The lure of the berry has claimed you.

To see blueberrying at its best one must go to the flat stretches of the French Country, along the lower St. Lawrence. We have blueberry patches, it is true, here in the Townships, but not on the same scale, nor hardly of the same size or quality. Not to excel in anything, however, does not necessarily preclude us from enjoying it. And, after all, "berrying does not consist chiefly in getting berries, any more than fishing consists chiefly in getting fish. The essence of berrying is the state of mind that accompanies it." And there is something restful about a blueberry patch, something soothing about the rhythmic patter-patter, with which the neat little round balls roll down into your pail. There is no need to wander, no fear of snakes, no tax of any kind whatsoever. All you have to do is to settle down among the low-growing bushes, your pail conveniently near, and pick. But if you are stationary your eyes and thoughts are not. You are conscious of every least change of color passing over the hills. The ripple of light upon tree and grass, the blue canvas of the sky with its shifting gallery of cloud etchings, the stream

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with its thousand studies in reflected shadows—they all recall the creed in the French school of Art that there is nothing to be considered in painting so much as light. You come upon little vacated nests of ground sparrows. You are brought to book and roundly scolded by frisking squirrels. Soft breezes waft resinous odors from the woods; the good warm smell of earth comes up to you; a deep content and acquiescence in things as they are enters into you—all to the plink-plink of dropping blueberries.

The rush of the springtime is over, the rich exuberance of summer on the wane, autumn with its stimulus and haunting beauty is not yet; when blackberries once more lure us to the woods. Blackberrying is the most exciting of all the kinds of berrying. It requires the most diplomacy, calls at once for wariness and daring, patience and fortitude. As a disciplinarian blackberrying takes first rank. Not only do the thorns tear your clothes to ribbons unless you are careful, not only do they cover you with unlovely evidences of embraces of a close and unfriendly nature, but, with the propensity of the blackberry for searching out old broken down stone walls and thriving in direct proportion to the obstacles presented, certain other elements—quite sportslike—enter in. But these conditions understood and accepted there is much to enjoy. There is no stooping and no hulls to be pinched off, as in strawberrying, no exploring visitors to be

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helped out, as in raspberrying, less monotony than in blueberrying. And one's dishes fill so fast! Bush after bush weighed down with great ebony pendants awakens some primal instinct to possess, incites to effort. Your fingers become wonderfully adept in running over and under the branches, letting them slip back, stripped, into place, while you move on to the next. You lose track of time and place. Your identity is merged. You do not think. It is not that it matters how soon your dish is filled, or whether it is ever filled—one always has impossible expectations when one starts out—but after a little everything is dwarfed by the pursuit itself.

Yes, berrying is a sport. And like other sports not the least pleasing feature of it is the coming home, tired and footsore, perhaps, but with full dishes, to find someone waiting who is perennially amazed at the quantity you have picked "one by one, and not so thick, either"—someone who is full of compassion as you relate your mishaps, who waxes indignant at "those other people," who presumes to your pet places, who leads you skillfully back to gloat over the rounded platters—like the heroines of the old novels, the cynosure of all eyes. But, "from any fruition of success, no matter what, shall come forth something to make a greater struggle necessary," and presently you find yourself planning fresh excursions to pastures old and new, for—another summer.

14.

Gardens Enclosed

Gardens Enclosed

“MY ideal garden,” writes Mrs. Ely in that fascinating, and helpful, and beautifully illustrated article, “Color Arrangement of Flowers,” which appeared in *Scribner’s Magazine*, “is one a little distance from the house, and so surrounded by trees and enclosed by hedges that the windows of the house cannot look down upon it.”

To walk a goodish way, to lift an iron latch and let the gate click to behind you, to be greeted by a thousand tangled odors of Arabia, to see, as it were, whole “choirs of color in one color, like a choir of boys, all with treble voices singing in the sun,” to leave behind the little ills of yesterday, the perplexities of to-day, and penetrate into the very heart of Being—that is to effect the quality of your garden enclosed. For every garden has an atmosphere, just as every person has a character. Some radiate cheerfulness broadcast, like so many Mark Tapleys. Some convey to us hidden things of golden meaning. A garden is a work of art just as surely as is a poem, or a picture, or a bit of statuary.

But if they have their æsthetic side, even more have

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they their practical. And in these days of formal gardens and pergolas and artificial ponds, one does well to remember at the outset that "Art out of doors must be founded upon rationality, purpose, fitness." A good rule to follow is the dictum laid down by William Morris in respect to furnishing a house: "Have in it only such things as you know to be useful and believe to be beautiful." Formal gardens are appropriate and in good taste only where art is dominant. The attempt to introduce them, in this country, oftener than not defeats its own aim. Grotesqueness is apt to masquerade as originality. Once in a great while, however, you chance upon a formal garden where it is quite otherwise, and when that happens the effects are of the happiest.

I remember, as a child, visiting at a house where one must walk quite ten minutes before the garden was glimpsed. And always, as one came up, one saw white sails moving across the blue of the lake beyond, and always, as twilight fell, the sails flamed orange, and mauve, and amethystine. It was an Italian garden, properly speaking, but every now and then it had a pretty little way all its own of running away and doing just as it liked. As when it left the rose borders and arranged beds and fountains and became a walk between gnarled, patriarchal willows on one side, and a high bank brave with gaillardias, bachelor's buttons,



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nasturtiums, mullein pinks and like old-fashioned bloom, on the other, and then for ever so far was only just a walk—but *such* a walk! For long years before the willows had been bent and trained to over-panoply it, and now one must walk slightly stooping beneath the mighty grey coils, with the muffled lapping of lake water in one's ears until, suddenly, one steps out on the beach in time to drink in the poignant beauty of the afterglow.

Another, an old-fashioned garden, ran back and down to where a slow-moving river bathed the twisted limbs of very old trees. However remote in the garden you might be its liquid murmur came to you—low, unhurried, musical. There was a stone wall round this garden, and round and over the stone wall climbed roses, and round and over and among the roses flitted humming birds and many butterflies. And in one corner of the wall, I remember, just where the petals from the Fameuse tree did not fall, was the wild garden. You respected the methodical perennials that met public expectation by never failing to put in an appearance each year. You seldom passed the old-man, or the rosemary, or the lemon verbena, or the sweet-briar without surreptitiously acquiring a sprig or leaf. The pinks, the English daisies and sweet williams, the petunias, columbines and marigolds were fine to “make up things” about. But the wild garden was so—queer.

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To see gourds flourishing in among the elect, blissfully unconscious of their solecism, to watch the oil-plant grow almost visibly, and count every fresh acquisition of the hen-and-chickens, to recognize old-maid's tears and Jacob's ladder, as they came up, and wonder what the fuzzy-leaved thing could be—these were some of the joys of hanging over the wild garden.

Although one cannot go quite so far as to indorse that hard saying, "A flower cut from its plant and placed in a vase is as a scalp on the walls of a wigwam," still flowers never seem so much *like* flowers as when growing. Nor is it necessary to have "blue" and "pink" borders, and be able to rate your asters, off-hand, as ten thousand. Judicious color arrangement, that helping nature paint her living pictures, is interesting in the extreme, but when left to herself nature has a way, under the most inauspicious circumstances, of blending her tones so as to avoid the inartistic. You rarely see two colors clash. Not even when the bloom is past and you might expect her to grow careless, is she betrayed into the incongruous. The bright red berries which cover the honeysuckle, the stately olive-green pods of the oriental poppy, cushioned with serrated black-brown plush, even the more sober oblongs in which the sweet peas and lupins pack away their seeds—these are each in their own way exquisite in their symmetrical fitness. And so it goes.

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But you cannot reason about your garden. It has grown into your heart and is not to be dissected. When the daffodils, early in the spring, spread in one sheet of softly shimmering gold across the bulb border you think "There can be nothing more beautiful than that." When the roses blush into bloom, and bell after bell of the foxglove swings to the bee, your allegiance is theirs. And in the fall, when the sweet peas are past and the blue flame of the larkspur extinguished, and the phlox "had its day and ceased to be," and the salvias blazed their brilliant life away, always there are dahlias, many-hued and gladioli, with shades like the delicate shades in a sea-shell alternating with daring impressionistic splashes—and you perjure yourself anew. For it is with flowers as it is with books. Different ones respond to different moods. There are times when to sit under the white fragrance of a syringa bush answers one's every need. Times when it is enough to walk, slowly, the length of the long hollyhock border, feasting one's eyes upon the perfect presentation of every known variety. Times when the orange and lemon flame of Iceland poppies, as seen against dusky evergreens, is to the eye as esoteric music to the ear. Times when you want to sit away, "out of the picture," to get the effect of the whole from a distance. Times when you cannot be too near, and would drink yourself into the color heaven through the portals of the wistfullest flower that blows.

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The flowers that "no garden can be without" are seemingly endless. "A garden ought to produce one of everything," says Charles Dudley Warner. To fall below this standard, he adds, is as if one had no pew in church. We all know one interloper that we welcomed into our midst and were loth to eject until its lawless proclivities left us no option—the rudbeckia, or golden glow. It is amusing enough to read Mrs. Ely's strictures as to the best way to foster it, in her "A Woman's Hardy Garden," knowing the cold disapproval with which she came to regard "that flower, dear to me ten years ago, that I now entirely dislike." "Rudbeckia plants two feet apart," she writes at this unenlightened date, "will grow into a solid mass." And again, "The golden glow should be divided every other year. I started in with fifty plants, and think it will soon be possible to have a farm of them."

Gardens without this plebeian nomad have a tendency every now and again to petition for extended territory, and are apt to be limited only by the grounds of the owner, or the capacity of his pocket-book. "To be able to grow all the flowers she likes, to have all the space she wants in which to grow them, and all the men she needs—really good and efficient men—to cultivate them, and a husband who never grumbles at the amount of fertilizer she uses"—so does one woman gardener picture forth her own special heaven, the while she

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plaintively laments Man's inability to understand why a little garden with a few plants are not enough for any woman.

But whatever the size of your garden enclosed the world seems always young in it. Every day is the grass fresh painted, something new to be seen in "those delicate toys of God that we call flowers." All the ages of the earth is in their roots, all the novelty of the instant in their life. "The imaginative dream of flowers," says Richard Jeffreys, "but the practical possess a garden." And possessing it no one but a practical person knows the zest, and the forethought, and the ceaseless pains that go into making it successful along all its lines. What beginner has not been perplexed by reading in one place the emphatic assertion that the plant she is setting out thrives in sandy soil, and must on no account have its feet wet, only to see in another the contradictory evidence that as all wise-acres are aware, so-and-so requires a rich, moist loam? Or who has not known that dark hour when he goes out and finds that the ravages of the cutworm have laid some cherished favorite low, or that the thrip is on the celery?

But gardening is nothing if not philosophic. If things grow, so much to the good. If not, well, it has been a labor of love, and the element of chance at least redeems it from tameness. Nor do we greatly value

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success too easily won, any more than we appreciate a summer of continuous sunshine. A rainy day, now and again, does humans as well as flowers good. Personally, I think I like gardens best in the rain—the kind of rain that falls softly all day from low, pearl-grey clouds. Then it is that I like to go off by myself and listen to the “drip-drip” on the leaves overhead, and feel the plants growing, and breathe in the good, wholesome smell of the rain. I wander from border to border, and from plant to plant. How green everything is! The leaves shine as if polished by attentive fairies, the flower faces glow. And something of the peace that is of all, that is yet of none, enters into you, until, like Borrow in Lavengro, you feel that “surely this is one of the pleasant moments of life.” “One,” we say, for every possessor of a garden enclosed knows these moments to be many, and that as they pass each, in turn, seems more pleasant than the last.



15.

Days Off

Days Off

"IT is felt by many," says Frank Yeigh in writing of the Alpine Club in Canada, "that as Canadians we have not begun to realize the value of our mountain asset—not from a commercial point of view alone, based on the timber wealth of their shores, or the hidden mineral wealth of their veins, but rather from the scenic standpoint." To certain natures mountains are a continual challenge. They cannot rest until they scale them. The more difficult the ascent, the greater their desire to be the first to reach the top. Where the average man is content to admire from a distance, the climber is obsessed, tormented, called, defied—everything but left alone—by the climber's passion to climb. The view obtained from the top may be "worth it," but they are hardly the stamp of men who would exert themselves greatly for view alone. Nor is it altogether the risk involved, though with some that is a not inconsiderable part of the charm. But civilized man still craves struggle with primal forces, still resents the idea that there is anything that he cannot master, still is willing to forfeit his life if so be he can help on the march of events.

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What the Matterhorn and the Jungfrau are to Switzerland, the Pinnacle, and Round Top, and Owl's Head, and Orford are to the Eastern Townships. Owl's Head, beetling over Lake Memphremagog, is, in summer, seldom without a line of excursionists zigzagging up its sides. Possibly that is the reason that the true climber so often finds himself bound in quite another direction, either for the Pinnacle, in Abercorn, or Mount Orford, in Shefford. To reach the latter, from Knowlton, it is necessary to make a start about five o'clock in the morning. Then it is all to the good if your driver takes the wrong turn by the little white Brill Church and you go over Bolton Mountain before he discovers his mistake. Beyond the mountains there are still people, says the old adage. It seems difficult to believe off here in this labyrinth of hills, this waste of rock, this profundity of silence. Let one follow the curving road to the right but far enough, however, and he will find himself in the settlement known as the Lost Nation. Or, if he is enamoured of the one he is upon and keeps right on, he will presently descend on the other side of the mountain into St. Etienne. Or, if he goes back and on past the little church, the hills will recede and the country become more open and rolling, and scattered farm-houses spring up along the way. There is a great deal of character in these houses. There are the cheerful,

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up-to-date ones with flowers in the bay windows and front beds, and a general air of well-being from the dog on the door-mat to the chickens and geese in the barn-yards, and the little pigs scampering in their run. There are those scrupulously neat white houses with green blinds, and water barrels at the corners, and close-cropped lawns. There are the little unpainted houses, swarming with children, bow-legged and unwashed, who run out to hang over fences and stare you out of countenance as you pass. Houses with one side painted only, or it might be the door, but with quite the air of having done their best and being of the quality. "This is what I could do, had I but the mind," these houses seem to say. And one regards the splash of vermilion, or orange, or green, with respectful awe.

And so past fields where Flora's paint brush and daisies and clover and hardhack and meadow lilies paint the grass, and little brooks run out to gurgle under bridges, and the *tck-tck-tck* of the mowing machine, from some remote region, is only a little louder than the chirp of the crickets. And so round one side of little Magog Lake, with a freshening breeze blowing straight off the bluest of inland waves. And so, at last, to the foot of Orford.

The first stage of the ascent, from the climber's point of view, is almost disappointingly easy. So lavishly has nature expended her gifts that the steady

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upward grade is disguised, and one seems passing through a delightful wood, rather than climbing a mountain. We breathe a Herrick atmosphere "of brooks, of blossoms, birds and flowers." Some one of summer's wandering voices—now the fine careless rapture of the thrush, now the robin's cheery crescendo—is ever blending in with other wood sounds and silences. The path, no sooner emerging from one shade than it enters another, owes much of its charm to its power of evoking reverie. Continually are we conscious of those phases of nature which, where man would labor for use, labors only for beauty. We have the feeling that, as we mount upwards, something from the far-away ever escapes before us. What is best is that which is not seen, what all the brushes of all the painters cannot give us.

But presently you notice that your companion is slightly above you instead of on a level. Presently you feel the need of pulling yourself upward by resinous evergreens. Presently, stopping to look back and down, you see through the green aisles, far below, a patchwork world laid out in little squares stretching away to toy mountains. And now climbing begins in good earnest. The trees become scrubbier, the rocks more rugged and straight up and down. One beetling crag is scaled but to find another awaiting you. The exhilaration, the passion of climbing enters into you. Up

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—up—up. You could climb forever. You welcome every obstacle. Nothing is too difficult. Nothing without its charm. Wholly sorry are you when you find yourself at the top. And yet there is a certain pleasure in the surcease of effort, when it has attained its end. A certain satisfaction in looking down upon what generally looks down upon you. Sunshine and shadow chase each other in rapid succession over meadow, and plainland, and village, and lake and river, and plays with wonderful effect upon the interlapping peaks beyond. The air being clear you can easily distinguish Mount Royal and Jay Peak, and know the far glimmer to be Lake Champlain. Wherever you look, the magic of color! Those great poets, the mountains, react like sublimest music upon you. And as the sun stoops to the west and the changing lights deepen and darken, they melt one into another, giving the illusory effect of withdrawing to a great distance, of leaving man and his small concerns far, far behind.

Over beyond Eastman there are acres—miles—of forest. Here are the Eastman lumber camps. Here one takes a backward step and slips off the coiled complexities of the twentieth century. Here, upon a certain day in July, came two city boys, past masters of ornithology, botany and geology, but possessed of only a smattering knowledge of wood-craft. While they were “going to the woods for the woods’ sake,” to lend zest

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to their outing and give to it the interest of a purpose, they were presumably prospecting for copper or asbestos, one of them having taken the Science course at McGill. They had supplied themselves with hammers and leather bags, wore heavy boots, and when a guide had likewise been procured they struck out into the woods with spirits as light as their knapsacks. It was wonderful, to eyes weary with the glare of asphalt, to be off there by themselves in a grateful wonder of moving green, following in Indian file a man whom they signalled to one another was a "character." Their quick-darting glances to right and left that no least detail of this woodland paradise be lost upon them became in time automatic as the quaint phraseology of his dialogue grew upon them. They fell back to tell one another just how rich it was, and what a cinch to have got such a bully old lad to guide them. And all the while Oscar, as he was called, continued to reel off tale after tale wherein he was inspired to do just the right thing, in just the right way, at just the right time, thereby saving the lives of his party. He had a way of polishing off these hairbreadth escapes with an off-hand, "But gosh! that warn't nawthin'," which was very effective. And every little while, by way of variety, he would throw in an "An' I could take you two fellers here, an' lose you two fellers, jest ez easy—ez easy!" And as he ran them up and down with a scornful, ap-

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praising eye, whatever good opinion they might previously have held of themselves dwindled appreciably.

When they came to ledges of rock he was indefatigable in hammering off pieces which he presented to the Science student with a look at once careless and profoundly knowing.

"What's yer tag fer that?"

And when the momentary silence of inspection ended with the return of the specimen and an impatient "Oh, iron pyrites—only iron pyrites," unfailingly would come the response, "Jest what I thought! Ion-pritees—Yaas."

The boys ceased calling him a cinch—they used more expressive epithets. Also they tried to elude him and his specimens by recourse to strategy. "He may be an adjectival bore but at least he's a good guide," they told each other, as the sound of his hammer ceased, and they heard him stumbling through the underbrush after them. It was funny. That was the word for it—funny.

Along about five in the afternoon they no longer turned aside to look at a curious rock formation. Their feet ached. They loathed the sight of a boulder. All sights were the same to them. They stopped and hailed Oscar, who had been lagging farther and farther in the rear, and waited till he came up. But he of the Science persuasion forestalled the inevitable question by saying, "Don't poke that d— pyrites under my nose if you

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don't want me to throw my hammer at you. Where are we, anyhow? We want to get into that lumber camp, and we want to get there quick. Understand?"

Oscar looked pained.

"Now don't you two fellers go to gettin' excited—gettin' excited," he pleaded.

"What'll you bet the old lobster hasn't a glimmering of where he is?" whispered one of the boys, as they watched with unwilling amusement the cautious explorations of their guide.

"See here—you!" he called, when an hour's difficult plodding had been productive of nothing more than additional blisters. "I wish you'd tell us, straight, if you know where we're going. Were you ever in these woods before? Do you know them?"

"Know 'em!" repeated Oscar, indignantly, "why I could take you two fellers here, an' I could lose you two fellers, jest ez easy—ez—"

"Strikes me you've done it," muttered the boys.

"Eh? Now don' you two fellers go to gettin' excited—gettin' excited." He started off, aimlessly.

The "fellers" looked at one another blankly, and their lips formed the word "sell." Then they set to work and "took their bearings." They had started out here. The lumber camp was there. They had wandered thus and so. They couldn't be far from such and such a place. Having arrived at which conclusion they

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set out again. After a little they heard Oscar following in their wake, stealthily. Darkness was fast closing in upon them when a shout in the rear told them that he had recognized some landmark. Then came the sound of frantic snappings and cracklings, as he made a quick *détour*, and came out in front of them, just as the lights of the camp twinkled through the trees.

"He-e-re we *be*," he announced, with a fine indifference as to the how of their getting there, "here we be. What'd I tell you fellers? Don' never do no good to go to gettin' excited."

For a minute the boys looked at one another uncertainly. Then the humor of it was too much for them, and as they staggered into camp they laughed and laughed again.

About two o'clock on the morning of the fifteenth of June the inhabitants of the little village of Knowlton are yearly awakened by the rumble of many buckboards upon their streets. If they get up and look out they see, indistinctly in the gloom, three men crowded in front, a half-grown boy standing up behind, something long and slender and supple projecting from the rear. It is the first day of open fishing on the lake, and the men are coming down from the hills to begin with the dawn. As they stand round in the boathouse, waiting their turn to embark, many are the jokes cracked about the number of fish that will be left in

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the lake, when *they* get in. Everyone is in great good humor. Everyone knows everyone else, or if he does not it amounts to the same thing. There is a freemasonry about fishing that dispenses with small conventions. One after another the boats push off and drop away from the wharf. One after another they round the point and "make" for Soules's Bay. Six o'clock and every sort of craft, manned by every sort of crew, is afloat.

When one has sat and watched the stars pale and "go out like an ill-parcelled fire," and seen the dim outlines of the shore recede, and followed every least change in the drama of dawn—one comes to feel a very real affection for the little lake, is aware that certain reserves between nature and man have been withdrawn, that they speak a mutual language. Some alchemy that is of earth and of sky and of water, and that is yet of none, acts like the spell of the desert, and all is forgotten—but the time and the place and the pastime. Salt water fishing may have its points. There have been times when setting lobster traps off the rocky coast of Maine, and skimming away in little naphtha launches leaving them to fulfil their mission, has seemed an enviable lot. But the element of chance does not enough enter in. How otherwise it is on our Eastern Township lakes! First of all your bait must be of the approved kind, or, if you use flies, they must be

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neither too gaudy nor too dull to offend the piscatorial taste. Secondly, you must be put wise as to the best fishing preserves. And thirdly there are countless things that no good fisherman ever does, any one of which may result in your fish getting away.

And so you glide noiselessly over the pellucid water (for in the Townships the first few days of fishing are, by tacit consent, restricted to trolling) at liberty to think your own thoughts, or none at all, assured that nothing could well be lovelier than the moving lights upon the hills, unless it be the moving lights upon the water, or the dappled lights in the woods, or the thousand shimmering reflections along shore, or—a violent tug at your line and, presto! you are back in the world of action once more, where a wrong move means all the difference between success and failure in landing your fish. It weighs all of a ton—or seems to. You are convinced that you are pulling up the bed of the lake. It must be a whale. He is full of fight and thrashes about as your long steady pulls bring his flashing sinuosities into view. He makes a mad rush under the boat and you think that you have lost him. But no! He is still on, and a minute more and he is flopping about in the bottom of the boat, a “bang-up five and a half pounder,” as your *vis-à-vis* exultantly informs you. That is the beginning. Fishing in the Townships is not so good—or so bad—that all you have

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to do is to drop a line into a ripple and pull it up with a fish on the end of it. True sport, to my thinking, should call for some skill and manœuvring, and not be too easily successful to cheapen the finnesse displayed. To see the fish jumping all round you while your line swims lax, to experience the false alarms that follow in the wake of floating lily-pads or too close conjunction with Reed Island, or a submerged log, to witness the unparalleled luck of the boat alongside and then, after a dragging, nibbleless hour, to feel two quick jerks at your line—that is to taste the bliss of fishing unalloyed. then the lines:

Venture as warily, use the same skill,
Do your best whether winning or losing it,

which Bliss Carman says are so apt to murmur themselves over and over in the waning hours of an unlucky day, form a cheerful accompaniment to the act of drawing in, fully as much as inciting to renewed effort.

If half the zest of brook fishing is in the campaign for individuals, the uncertainty of your prize forms a large proportion of that when fishing on the lake. "Given the gleam of early morning on some wide water," writes an ardent fisherman, "a heavy fish breaking the surface as he curves and plunges, with the fly holding well, with the right sort of rod in your fingers

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and the right sort of man in the other end of your canoe, and" he concludes, "you perceive how easy is that Emersonian trick of making the pomp of emperors ridiculous." It may be advanced that while fishing is perfectly legitimate when subordinated to sustenance, which is a need, it ceases to be a sport when carried on merely as the surplusage of vitality. But the same applies to all other forms of sport no less. Each one must draw his own line between right enjoyment and the greed which involves the sacrifice of higher things.

At a club dinner in Montreal some time ago the talk turned upon sport, and a discussion arose as to the proper synonyms to be used in designating a number of geese. "Flock" was suggested. "Gaggle" had its advocates. Then the host turned to his left-hand neighbor.

"What do they say out in the Townships, Mr.—?" he asked.

The Townships man thought a moment, then laughed.

"Why," he said, "when farmers out my way hear the *honk-honk* in the fall, and look up and see the V-shaped ranks going south, all they say is, "There goes *some* geese."

Nor are we much better provided with technical terms to give the fish that we bring home as a memento of our day off. "A good catch," "a tidy string," "a fine

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mess," "not a bad haul,"—these are some of the expressions used. But they suffice. What crotch ever cut has held fish of like proportions to the backsliders that nibbled and thought better of it, or were lured quite up to the boat's rim only to somersault back into the water, while the occupants of the next boat sat transfixed with wonder at their size? No. You may pass your string round, and hear it appraised at double its weight with a smile of proud ownership, but in your heart you care not at all whether the actual weight be twenty pounds or forty. For the supreme test that proves fishing to be a real sport is that no true fisherman is dependent upon his luck for his happiness.

16.

The County Fair

The County Fair

PREPARATION for this time-honored event in rural parts, properly speaking, lasts the year round. While February storms expend themselves the inmates of scattered farmhouses pore over splendiferous spring catalogues, which certain astute ones have cunningly launched upon a winter world. As the list grows ever longer and stubby pencils stubbier, uneasy consciences find justification in rosy previsions of yellow or green bits of pasteboard dangling suggestively from floral creations at the horticultural show in the fall. These previsions, secretly cherished, persist through the intermediate stages of growth and warfare with the cutworm and his ruthless kind, but are scouted at in those neighborly interchanges of visits to see what So-and-so has, and whether one stands any "show" oneself. However, the potted plant, together with toothsome culinary confections, the pick of the herd, the sultan and his harem, and they of the Shropshire and Tamworth breeds—these with all their accessories find themselves bound one fine September day for this rendezvous, so dear to the heart of country folk,

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the county fair. All roads lead there; and over them pass people of every class and aspect.

In the wee sma' hours of the morning the hired help and boys convey thither the stock in slatted crates and high-boarded wagons, whence they are transferred to the stalls lining the entire circumference of the fair ground fence. By the time they have been fed, bedded, and watered, extraneous elements have entered and are driving in tent stakes, and are setting forth the various paraphernalia of their craft. Nor is this always accomplished without some wrangling. The fortune-teller, that gifted seventh daughter of the seventh daughter of euphonious name, who can with the aid of a cube of glass lay bare the mysteries of past and future, she of the flashing eye and raven locks, resents the proximity of the sword-swallower's booth, and there is language and much fierce gesticulation before an understanding is reached.

If all is bustle and confusion without, no less busy are those whom the horticultural building has from time to time received into its cool, roomy vastness. Upon the counters, spanning the whole length of the ground floor, men are artistically arranging baskets of the year's maturity to the best advantage. Even at this early stage a plate of "extra fine" Red Astrachans or grapes, a mammoth squash, or a strange species of the fantastic gourd family, elicits an admiring ejaculation

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from the hurrying passer, who has not yet been succeeded by the slow-moving, fingering, insatiable throng of sight-seers. In the corner, under the stairs, the White Ribboners are laying out Pamphlets and basket work for sale. And, as one mounts, one sees through an aperture in the partition, rows of speckless carriages, sleighs, furniture, and catches the initial strains of the piano man's waltz, destined, later, to become but the faintest monotone in the vast strophe of pulsating life. Upstairs, the counters are buried beneath flowers of every design and hue; triumphs of culinary art; and intricate examples of what the eye, needle, and a lamentable perseverance can accomplish in fragile, useless prettinesses. Two ladies, presumably judges, are vacillating between a pillar of asters in graduating shades, and an anchor design of beautifully arranged mixed flowers. I feign interest in a gaudy bedspread that I may hear their cogitations.

"Are you sure?" inquires one, uncertainly.

"Why, yes, as sure as I can be," responds the other. "I drove through his grounds only last week—on purpose, you know—and saw purple asters just like those."

The first lady sighed.

"It is a pity," she said, "this is so pretty, and that so coarse. But I suppose it would never do not to give *his* the prize?"

Her companion shook her head emphatically.

"Never!" she supplemented, succinctly, "he would be raging."

Then they pinned the first prize on the asters.

But later in the afternoon I saw the closing scene of this little drama. An impulse to see once more the line of reconnoitering femininity—heads aslant, fingers fumbling, tongues criticising—impelled me to go upstairs again. A voice speaking alone by the flower stand drew me that way, and I recognized one who is great in the land.

"Ladies," he was saying, his voice distant with displeasure, "ladies, you have er-r-ed in judgment."

And he proceeded to give a dissertation on the relative merits of the two designs, detrimental to the one brazenly flaunting the honor prize, while the judges, standing crestfallen by, could only assent, miserably conscious the while that they had not only defied their own good taste, but offended the one of all others they were designing to please.

Squatted here and there behind their buggies, in social proximity with the unharnessed horse grazing near, are family groups munching their mid-day meal. Sallying forth to do likewise one passes children dragging at the hand of some uncompromising elder, who is engaged in renewing acquaintance with an erstwhile school friend.



W.C.M.M. The
County
Fair.

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"What is that, child? Punch and Judy? Well, by and by, when. . . ."

Something in the child's face awakens an echo from other years. Now, if "things" go awry, or hopes are slow in materializing, reason opens her stores of consolation. But what hope for a missed Punch and Judy? The gods themselves can do naught. Three hundred and sixty-five days of aching void, and then—oh bliss!—another.

A few steps farther on a little girl is opening her first prize-packet, breathless with anticipatory thrills that it may be a brass—a thousand pardons! gold, of course—watch. "It" turns out to be a toy snake, which wriggles uncannily. If she had only chosen the garnet packet she had taken up first—perhaps—who knows—?

More interesting, perhaps, than the heated tents, where for "only one dime" the beholder may witness the high dive, or see the fat woman immeshed with snakes, the wild man devouring raw meat, the child marvel sporting two heads, and like unholy sights—is that spot so popular to half-grown youth, where two rival concerns for selling cigars—a row of dolls on wire before a sheet, and ninepins ranged upon a table—are never without their votaries.

"Aw, jest watch him, now! Watch him! *Watch* him!" admiringly shouts the tall, black, foreign-looking proprietor of the former, whose smile is someway

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even more repellent than his frown, as a newcomer nervously fingers the ball, and makes several false starts.

"Pret-ty clo-o-se," comes from the fair, youngish, silly-looking stripling presiding over the ninepins, who has a flattering way of laughing up from under his eyes. "Pret-t-ty clo-o-o-se," and something in the subtly suggestive inflection that failure next time was one of the things that simply could not be, incited many an indifferent shot to a second and even third attempt.

It is as good as a play, as the phrase is, to watch the different competitors. There is the well-to-do young man, who first sees the affair when opposite, and turns with an "If there aren't those bally dolls! I used to make them topple over every time, when I was a kid. Wonder if—believe I'll try." He is always leisurely and self-assured, and calls patronizingly to him of the inky moustache to "look out, my man," and to "look lively there,"—and the dolls usually "toppled." Then there is the undersized boy, with the round straw hat and Sunday suit one never sees anywhere else, who approaches step by step, as if drawn by some potent mesmerism. He hangs round watching worshipfully while various loungers turn many dolls, till that inevitable moment arrives when the temptation proves too strong. And it is his turn to stand there in all his pitiful, nervous bravado, the cynosure of all eyes, he

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probably believes, a moment later to slink away and lose himself in the crowd, which has not witnessed his shameful failure.

But the prime good accruing from the fair is not that it affords foreigners the means of turning an honest penny, and children an easily-attained Mecca; not that it gives racers an occasion to show their mettle, and men of speculative propensities the opportunity to profit or lose according to their acumen in horseflesh; nor even that through the exhibit of produce farmers are enabled to drive many a hard bargain. The crowning good consists in the stimulus and practical benefit of the farming profession meeting and comparing notes; in sustaining interest in, and propagating the advance of industrial and agricultural pursuits; and the inevitable broadening of the people's horizon, through social intercourse with those in other walks of life. Apart from the break it makes in the tedium of routine, it is of inestimable value to Brown, who is going into sheep, to learn that his mode of feeding the ewes is in default, and responsible for the loss of as smart a pair of twins as ever rose upon stilt-like legs, and bumped saucy, black heads together. Nor are these exchanges of hard-earned experiences limited to farmers, alone. The people's parliamentary representatives seize this opportunity for meeting so many of their constituents *en masse*. Any new discovery or

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improvement at the Experimental Farm is recounted, and questions of national import broached, while his hearers reciprocate in kind, or submit grievances for redress—should any such exist. The game of politics, indeed, accounts for the presence of many whose interest in agriculture or horticulture is superficial. A ministerial figure moving here and there among the crowd, the occupants of two motors in earnest consultation—so have laws been altered, to these have candidates owed their nomination.

Not every one who comes, however, is actively interested in the intrinsic value of what they see, or even a claimant for parliamentary honors. A fair is sure to be amusing, or the spin over the hills, beginning to flush and glow in the autumnal light, and down between orchards, harvest and pumpkin fields, is poetry of motion through poetry of scene. But somehow—somewhere—they catch the contagion, these transients from city thoroughfares. They were not conscious of any yearning toward nature and the simple life when they entered. They are not sure when they first felt with Charles Dudley Warner that "To own a bit of ground, to scratch it with a hoe, to plant seeds, and watch their renewal of life,—this is, the most satisfactory thing a man can do." But some latent chord has been stirred, and the learned scion of a long line of lawyers the following spring irrefutably proves that

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he is of the lineage of Adam, by being mightily concerned about the crops on his new fifty-acre farm, whither he transports his family in lieu of Europe.

Thus the influence emanating from the county fair is deep and wide-spreading in its results, affecting, in short, the welfare of the whole country. A sort of thermometer it is, too, of that country's progress, improving as it improves, on the threshold, perhaps, of its greatest era.

17.

Rambles *in the* Aftermath

Rambles *in the* Aftermath

A WALK over the hills of Brome is, in the early days of October, an experience not soon forgotten. Whether because the colors in the foliage have burned out to a sombre richness, Old-World in its tone, or the mountains have taken on the lapis-lazuli bloom peculiar to our autumns, or an evanescent something pervades the very atmosphere—continually are we reminded of the genius of Jules Guerin, of Eastern lands, colorful, lush, intense, remote. The dun-grey road beckons us on. The tender green of the second “catch” of grass paints every rounded knoll and strip of clearing. Coral are the maples that have been scarlet. Palest lemon the ferns. Fairy-gold shimmers beneath birches beginning to reveal the purity of their silvery outlines. In the depths of wooded gorges leaves, multi-colored, float slowly down, light on lichened boulders, on the brook that dreams its way down to the carding mill. A weather-beaten house with a pink roof attracts by its very grotesqueness. Against the skyline dun shocks of corn are silhouetted, like a child’s line of soldiers drawn up in battle array. And ever behind you follows the sun, a

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spectral eye turned upon a spectral world. And never are you quite without the feeling of, as it were, walking right into a stage setting—so illusory the effect of the clarified light, so fantastic the brave splashes of contrasted color. And this sensation continues throughout much of October. You move through scenes where you are persuaded it needs but the stage manager's signal to bring the actors in from the wings.

A squat, cross-eyed countryman, with a face gnarled as a nut, performed this feat for me one languorous, passion-laden afternoon. I had wandered far—in the direction of the Lost Nation. The hills had closed silently in about me. For miles neither house nor man nor stir of life had invaded nature's calm. The tense quiet of it became oppressive. Before turning back I determined to scale a hill just ahead and look off, if so be I might shake off this imprisoning sense. The road was precipitous and in one place gullied down to bed rock, where spring freshets had had their way. The squirrels, honeycombing the snake fences, after startled looks fled madly. I gained the top and turned and felt a stab of pain at the sheer beauty of it. From west to east my eyes travelled and back again. And all that I saw was woods—woods. Everywhere woods. Sometimes a few inches of clearing crept up into them, but soon grew discouraged and fell back. Sometimes a fringe of willows marked the course of a river as it

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hurried through and escaped. And the mountains slept as they kept guard, and the blue haze of autumn was over all. "It is too much," was my thought, "it overpowers. It would not be good to be alone here." And then I saw, a quarter of a mile or such a matter away, the ruins of what might once have been a house. I went to it. I could not be certain that the level, slightly raised turf had been a road. But the sagging post on one side of the rotten beams spanning a trickle of stagnant water surely marked the entrance to grounds. And there was no doubt, as I came up, about the black line of boards framing the superb view having been a porch. There seemed even to have been something of a garden, too—old-fashioned flowers for the most part, though I wondered to see a straggly specimen of a rare Holland bulb among them. How could it have got there! The nut-faced farmer, carrying a sack of turnips cross-lots appeared in time to enlighten me upon many points. "He," the Englishman who had lived there, had been the "all-firedest queer one," it seemed, coming from no one knew where and just settling down and living on till he died. "He" was young, and a gentleman, and, I gathered, in some deep, hopeless trouble or under the shadow of a cloud that never lifted.

"Jest petered out, like," said the cross-eyed one. "Many's the time I've seed him puttering over them

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posies, or a-settin' here lookin' at nawthin', an' come over. But he seemed to see me way off. An' I had a sorter idee that them mountains they were more near. But I don' know. Never miss a day footin' it down to the Brill post-office fer his noospaper. In the rain he footed it, an' in the snow, an' in the heat—till all to onct he sorter giv up an' petered out like what I told on."

He stopped, and I saw he was looking meditatively at something far below in the valley. Following the direction of his glance I saw the trail of smoke, and made out, lower down, a toy train crawling into the station at Foster. The man at my side gave a grunt that might have been meant for a laugh, and indicated the train by a sweeping gesture.

"Them ain't what you might call big," he observed, in the manner of one who has pondered much, "nor yet heartenin' but day in an' day out he 'ud watch 'em." He shook his head. "Nobody ever come," he sighed. He hoisted the sack on to his back and moved away up the hill.

The sun had set. The toy train of cars had disappeared in the gathering murk. Suddenly it was very cold. I went back to the road and down into the valley—thinking.

There is, in the Eastern Townships, a certain hill-side slope over which every autumn color symphonies



"Looking downward—
a trail of smoke....."



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play—drama without words. Looking across green meadows, with greener pockets indenting them one sees, well down upon this slope, a line of blue-green evergreens tapering above the more gaudy plumes of the maples and ash. These blue-green evergreens are the New Road. To reach it, from the little village of Knowlton, a hot dusty stretch of the old must first be reckoned with—an old road that one has long since grown fond of because it leads to the new, because it carries you all the way to Carcassonne. At the line of divergence, at the white parting of the ways, a welcoming, insectral chorus rises from every hillock and closes in about you, springing up as you advance, swooning in your wake in vast waves of palpitating melody, felt but not heard as the evergreens troop down the slope to greet you.

Presently you turn off into a mossy footpath that winds between frost-blanchèd ferns and flaming sumach, that follows the ground hemlock and faintly sweet everlasting up the hill, that passes the queer, slanting thorn-apple and the knoll where squirrels are hurrying sticky green butternuts away for winter consumption, that finally gives upon a granite ledge, where you can look back and down upon the road up which you have come. Now, it shows richly red, carpeted with maple leaves, now, warmly yellow with the largesse of the birches. Again it receives mosaic of

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emerald light from the interlacing boughs overhead. A boy in white trousers and scarlet McGill sweater, emerges from the green aisle, swings round a curve, vanishes, and reappears again farther up. You watch him out of sight as you would an actor from the stage.

Skirting the wood where young growth of maple, spruce and many ferns commingle you are upon an upland pasture, sweet and strangely uplifting. Every step of the way you know. Know where the beechnuts are, and where to find the rock over which the hidden spring ever trickles. Feel, before you actually see, the little red brick farm-house down in the hollow among its gnarled apple trees. It is no surprise to find daisies and buttercups and dwarf goldenrod, untouched by frost, in the narrow cow-trodden lane, where the stone wall on either side has settled with the years, and lies submerged by the vermilion waves of clematis. And presently you have stepped over bars that are down, have passed into the woods. It was Bradford Torrey who asseverated that were he an artist he would paint wood interiors. Only an artist, perhaps, can appreciate the color effects. Only a sculptor the bold, clear-cut relief with which the dark line of the tree trunks stand out in the pellucid light. No region of scenic platitudes, this. Every least detail insists upon itself just as it insists upon being so purely Eastern Townships—not the White mountains in miniature, not “Italy up-

RAMBLES *in the* AFTERMATH

side down," as Ellery Channing once styled Massachusetts.

It is not until you are lying under a patriarchal pine, however, on a ledge from which you can look off to the horizon line on three sides that you give yourself wholly up to the spell of it—the potent, indescribable spell of it! Light that is something more than light dances fantastic sarabands through the leaves, mellows and draws you into it, impells you to listen at all your senses. Other days may show us beauty. Autumn days show us its soul. Like the figures that people a dream are those who pass and repass upon the road that dips down to the pasture bars. Watch a man and team watch cows loiter their seemingly purposeless way down to the pasture bars. Watch a man and "team" and little black dog revolve backward and forward, leaving an ever widening margin of brown in their wake, "doing" fall ploughing. In fancy you follow, as so often in your canoe, the devious windings of the creek through high blue-joint, and button plant, and sombre pine out to the lake. Overhead an eagle wheels with majestic gyrations, wheels until lost in the enamelled blue. From somewhere, far off, comes the plaintive monotone of bagpipes, whose mission it is to carry an old Scotchman overseas. Violet shadows steal over the mountains. Long bars of daffodil light glow in the west. And in it all is atmosphere, and over it all is

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peace. Peace, and a subtle, esoteric mystery—that mystery which makes our Canada so unforgettable, which creates and binds to her the love of her people, which, first or last, lays upon them her spell.

18.

Knowlton, *the* Picturesque

Knowlton, *the* Picturesque

THE prosperity of any nation can be pretty accurately estimated by its summer resorts. In direct proportion as the one increases is the effect noticeable in the more luxuriant appointments of the other. The back to the land craving is so essentially a part of human nature that from the multi-millionaire downward city dwellers build themselves rural retreats wherein to spend their leisure moments. No two persons ask the same thing of a place nor see the same thing in it. But if, as has been affirmed, the great thing in nature as well as in art is charm, it is not difficult to understand why Knowlton is so often the spot selected for these retreats. Unlike places which irritate one by their failure to be as interesting as would seem to have been intended, which, like certain painters, approach really fine effects only to miss them, Knowlton, with its combination of sternness in the *ensemble* and luxuriant softness in the detail, surpasses even one's most ardent previsions.

A number of years ago, before the summer tide flowed St. Agatheward, it was at once the playground and the sanitarium to which Montrealers betook them-

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selves for longer or shorter intervals each season. And the last few years has seen it again to the fore, all the better for its temporary eclipse. To be one of the foremost of present day resorts pre-supposes adequate water facilities for boating, canoeing, fishing and bathing, commodious and up-to-date hotels and boarding houses, a club house for dances, corn roasts and the like, tennis courts and golf links, pretty drives and walks, mountain accessible for picnic excursions—these as a matter of course. But Knowlton has other attractions as well. Conference Heights, which has attained the reputation of a Canadian Northfield, draws the serious-minded who are thus enabled during the July and August sessions to listen to discourses by prominent Canadian and American speakers. The Pettes Memorial Library is full of rare old volumes. While the Paul Holland Knowlton Memorial, the repository for curiosities and heirlooms (from the sinister tomahawk and Indian war club, ploughed up in this vicinity, to queer, awkward wooden agricultural contrivances in no wise resembling the machinery which has supplanted them, mysterious chests with secret compartments, affairs for making pills, a flax swingle, a loom and all the apparatus for making cloth, the wooden figure-head of the steamer *Highlander*, which plied the Great Lakes about 1850, and a strip of wall-paper, framed, upon the back of which the Confederates printed their

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last newspaper) donated from all over Canada, is a capital place in which to browse of a rainy morning. As is also the Annex consecrated to War Trophies.

One of the most salient features about Knowlton, perhaps, is that it is so thoroughly, so almost conservatively Canadian. American and even English sojourners are conscious of a subtle essence, which eludes analysis, which but increases when the sense of novelty subsides, which might be defined as Canada with an accent. This accent gives local color to some of the "characters" about. Those who relish a human flavor in their pleasures find here types as unconsciously quaint, as uniquely picturesque as they may wish to discover outside of their Dickens or De Morgan.

However charming a bit of landscape may be, it never seems quite complete without the finishing touch of water. As you ride over the hills near Pine Mountain, up and down, up and down, the opposing peaks continually changing their perspectives, you are obsessed by a haunting lack. The wood road, fringed with its perpetual garden of blowing bloom, could not well be improved upon. The elevated bluff, upon which you presently emerge, commands a panoramic view of undulating hillsides running down into smiling valleys, and valleys which lift themselves once more into the necklace of emerald and sapphire peaks that prick a

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poet's own sky. But it is not until your wandering eye has made out far down among the maples and spruces, a glint of moving blue that your involuntary sigh of satisfaction tells you what that lack is. And when you have plunged with the white ribbon—ever flowing before you, ever luring you on—down, down the winding declivity, and see between the dark line of the spruces a thread as of silver gliding lakeward, the elusive mystery ever pertaining to the unknown lays its spell upon you. Nor does familiarity with its every mood lessen this spell. Never quite the same, always holding itself slightly aloof, Brome Lake is still the impenetrable, "romantic sheet of water" the lithe Indian used as a short cut, when upon ruthless savagery bent.

Though Knowlton has come, to some extent, to mean Brome Lake, it has other beauty spots. To realize this one has but to follow the river (inadequately christened Cold Brook) from the moment it leaves the pond to frolic like white kittens at play over two waterfalls, under a bridge, upon its race in all its heady unrestraint between banks where adder tongues toss in the sun, on, on, in graceful, winding serpentine till it leaves its second bridge behind and goes more slowly, as befits a river which somewhere beyond the shadowed pencillings of the pines must render its account to the lake.

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Or there is the hidden brook—if you are so fortunate as to find it. It is not a regular, chattering, cheery, shallow, flippant brook, the hidden brook. If it has moods, one is not permitted to see them. Perhaps it has ambitions—who knows? Perhaps in its deep, silent, inscrutable way it may even have a goal. One only knows it as the hidden brook. One only comes to it on days when the hills and the lake and the river fail in their appeal. Ferns grow close to the water's edge; an apple bloom from somewhere floats like fairy shallop on fairy pool; birds come here to drink, and little live things among the yellow-green grasses rustle, and pipe, and chirp their muted concert upon varying keys. A stone's throw away violets blue the grass—little bits of heaven come down to earth. And always, as the sun goes down, the filter of green leaves is shot through with “the light that never was on land or sea,” and the cool, shadowy depths of the stream, itself, take fire and burn like molten gold.

Those born lovers of country ways for whom “no street comes truly into its own until it shakes off the dust of town and lapses into a state of nature, becoming a road,” find in the roads about Knowlton a variety of allurements which leaves little or nothing to be desired. Pre-eminently a rolling country, monotony or repetition is the one thing you look for in vain. Wherever you turn beauty of form and grouping simplicity

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of color arrangement unite in composing pictorial effects difficult to be excelled. There is the road round the lake, corresponding to Newport's ocean drive—if one may compare small things to great; the road through the Pass to Bolton Springs, Lover's Lane, the roads to Bondville, Brome, Cowansville, not to mention a whole category of Boltons.

A road that one cannot too often take in early October is that to Turkey Hill. Here is none of that dullness of cultivation which unpleasantly imposes the plodding routine of poverty upon the passer-by. The fields of corn, that earlier in the season have paled and rippled like watered silk as the wind played over them, have been cut and are standing in shocks. Goldenrod, wild asters and everlastings mingle in sweet confusion with the olive greens and burnt umbers of the ferns along roadsides. Bemapled hills are painted with an abandon that even the most daring of the impressionistic school would hesitate to copy as seen against their sombre setting of columnar hemlocks. Now and again you pass scattered farm houses, gathered pumpkins and squashes piled high on the side verandahs, and footworn paths running between the pump and the house; wide meadows, open to the sky, in which sheep graze, or lie, or dreamily look off at nothing; a bare-foot boy, driving cows home from pasture to be milked—just what there is about all this to make one linger,

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and turn back, and recall long afterward, it might be difficult to say. All that one knows on crisp October nights when the frost lies white on fallen leaves and "the lone moon walks a-cold," is that vacation is over, all that one feels is that he who can remember Knowlton can never more be quite unhappy.

19.

Harvest Home

Harvest Home

WHEN maples wave scarlet in the purpling haze, and pumpkins bespatter stubbly corn-fields with gold, and butternuts fall with muffled thud in the woods, country folk begin to think of their annual festival, the Harvest Home.

As a preliminary measure delegates, two by two, make a soliciting circuit of village and foothills. Incidentally, they square arrears in their social amenities at the same time. Having, like Captain Cuttle, made a note of what each feels like contributing, a mutual exchange of news, continued from the previous year, takes place. The operation of taking up geraniums, or putting in bulbs, or soap-making in the great iron kettle in the yard is suspended for the nonce, while those who cannot often "get down" to the metropolis learn what is going on in the world where the road runs down. To the beggars, as the hillfolk quaintly and appositely call the requisitioners, the view, the cluttered farm buildings, the westering sun on the clematised stone wall, the sheep and turkeys and hens and geese in the fields, all look very peaceful.

Twilight is darkening to night as you jog home-

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ward with your spoil, tangible as proclaimed by rotund revolutions of pumpkins under the seat going down hills, and prospective as recorded in your note-book. A great yellow cheese of a moon swings clear of the horizon. Mists rise from the marshes. Lights twinkle forth from windows. As you draw near one of these it flickers and goes out. A moment later it reappears at the shed door, showing up in bold relief a woman with a lamp and a man carrying a little black bag turning from hitching his horse to a tree: "Oh, Doctor! I am so glad you have come!"

In a sparsely-populated settlement on the Lower St. Lawrence a visiting clergyman relates that the Harvest Home service was interrupted by a stalwart dame striding up the aisle with a pumpkin pie under her arm. Upon reaching the altar and seeing that the most auspicious places were already occupied by triumphs of her neighbor's culinary skill, she thrust these ruthlessly aside, and plunked her own concoction down in their place. In most localities, however, the Church decorations do not excite emulative contention, being restricted in their range to the vegetables and fruits of harvest.

Artistically stacked oats eke out asparagus very successfully as a background against which to heap Calhoun pumpkins, Hubbard and Crookneck squashes, Ponderosa tomatoes, Mackintosh Red apples and

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braided strands of Golden Bantam corn. Surrounded by these products of the year's maturity, to joy "according to the joy in harvest" seems a consummation devoutly to be wished, the choir's paean, "Now thank we all our God with heart and hands and voices," less a traditional obligation than a sheer necessity.

In the basement, the decorative scheme is curtailed to edibles. Long tables span the length of the room, and on these,—sandwiched between string-marked silver and platters of cold meats,—beet and cabbage salads, pumpkin and apple pies, white and brown bread and all kinds of fruit make a brave showing. From the basement is wafted the aroma of coffee, and on the stove are huge kettles of steaming potatoes, mashed squash and turnips, and in the oven a pot of baked beans and pans of chicken and meat pies. From time to time someone squeezes in with a basket or covered dish and deposits a cake or tin of buns or a jar of whipped cream among the heterogeneous reserve store on the side table. Small boys and the squat, sandy-haired individual hired to "wash up after" regard each addition with an appraising eye, knowing that what is left over will fall to their share.

Meanwhile everything is bustlement and good cheer. The minister goes about shaking hands with everyone. A Harvest Home atmosphere pervades the place. A clatter of backward pushed chairs, a hush—

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the prelude to the minister's blessing—a louder buzz of conversation, perforated at intervals by someone asking someone else whether they will take tea or coffee—and the dinner is fairly launched.

In the main all goes well. The comedy-loving find diversion watching the byplay furnished by a self-constituted mother in Israel who, conspicuous chiefly by her absence during the arduous, getting-ready stage, comes in strong, so to speak, at the last lap. She hurries down the basement stairs, responding to greetings with pre-occupied nods, and unrolling her apron as she goes. When she has elbowed her way into the kitchen she dons it with a precipitation which would seem to augur well for the amount of work to be executed. But it soon becomes apparent that her rôle is rather to get work out of others—or produce the effect of doing so. Her air of riding the whirlwind and directing the storm is amusing or maddening to those who have born the brunt of the work, according as they are endowed with or lacking in the saving grace of humor.

Sometimes, the dispenser of avowed chicken-pie is brought to confusion by one of the cleric proclaiming to all and sundry that the flaky crust covers a deception.

"Chicken-pie?" he says, with stern displeasure, probing with his fork and producing a steak bone in confirmation of his statement. "Chicken-pie? I think not."

HARVEST HOME

And he helps himself sadly to baked beans, while the abashed waitress trips kitchenward to cock a humorous eye under other crusts, lest inadvertently she offend again.

Cups have many times been refilled, depleted dishes replenished before the minister invites certain of his male parishioners to adjourn to the Rectory for a quiet smoke. Of the rest, the hillfolk agglutinate into groups and visit, the girls and boys go out for a stroll, the waitresses make merry over their belated repast. Presently they will all congregate in the Church for the three o'clock service. And a diminished number will round off the day with supper and games. With the exception of the Church collection it has all been gratuitous. It has been a lot of work, and no one is a whit the better off. And yet, as surely as Autumn comes round, the feeling awakes for certain upland drives and familiar faces, and in the midst of city scenes and activities the mind previsions Harvest Home in the country.

20.

Autumn Days

Autumn Days

STUDY of the output of those artists who "have paint in their blood" would seem to indicate that much of their power has lain in their ability to make the trivial of service in the expression of the sublime. But then nothing that is, is trivial. And to the artist "a moment's monument"—to borrow Rossetti's famous phrase—can be evoked from almost any scene.

Many such a monument may be had at the cost of but a little exertion during the first days of early fall. There is subtle truth in the saying that walking stimulates the mentality, and prevents one from indulging in "a bovine observation of Nature." So that mostly it is upon foot that you sally forth, like Walt Whitman—that ardent apostle of the open road—feeling that you could walk—and walk—and walk!

A vagrant's morning, it is, all the landscape a-pilgrimage. At first, intoxicated by the paint-box of colors splashed promiscuously about no less than by the heady draughts of bracing mountain air, you take it in *en masse*. Of all things in life color and light and the mere act of *being* just then seem the most precious.

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Presently, however, you begin to differentiate. The diaphanous mist uprising from vari-tinted peaks; that lone maple playing orchestral color symphonies upon the turquoise keyboard of the sky; those lyrics of the roadside, the purple aster and dancing dwarf golden-rod; sheep of nomadic propensity outlined against the skyline; khaki shocks of corn marching in stolid ranks over an adjacent field; the lush wealth of ferns carpeting hillside clearings; a farm-hand, scythe on shoulder, loping crossfields to a second crop of clover; little clouds above the horizon that have somehow caught fire and, burning, sail the blue; trees, like gaudy fringe of some Eastern scarf, mirrored in the creek—these each and all compose pictures that constantly make you stand at gaze, taking mental photographs of what after all can never be adequately reproduced by brush or pen.

As always, it is for the hills that you have made. They are wonderful, our Canadian hills, once Nature's brush, following in the wake of the first frost, has begun to daub in the colors. Golden and emerald and brick-red and olivine are the maples. Their tops overlap one another like massed ostrich plumes. They paint the nearer ranges amethyst beneath their violet bloom. The valley brims with mellow light. And between its tawny banks the river drowns on its way to the lake.

When you have climbed the hill, and crossed two



"Dun Shocks
of Corn."

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upland pastures, and crawled under a "snake" fence, and entered the outskirts of a wood a-glint with iridescent lights, you feel as if in very truth you have stepped back into the fairyland of your childhood. Everywhere are little paths among the ferns and everlastings. Sometimes they lead you out upon granite elevations, where fuzzy clematis betresses stone walls, and cattle knee-deep in goldenrod, stand chewing their cud, and crickets sing the livelong day. Sometimes they lure you into the deeper sanctities of the woods proper, where the intensities of light fall, subdued, upon the fallen leaves of immemorial summers. Sometimes they take you to themselves. And then, deep down among ferns, sulphur hued, with Romance as a bloom over all, thoughts of mysticism like butterflies hover but do not light. You drift and dream.

Not so a few evenings later.

Days of operatic magnificence have swooned into nights of still, sensuous calm, when one day there is a change, a transformation. All life of sound has died from the air. Each painted leaf hangs separate, sentient, waiting, as it were, a signal. Towards dusk dun clouds, wind-winged, overcrawl the opaque sky. They muster. They hurry. The leaves begin to sigh and turn. There is a strange hush over the land, and then the sibilant murmur of rain. Night falls early and very black. As the storm increases a bullying wind

arises. It roars among the pines like surf booming against Maine rocks. It charges against the trees till they bend before the fierce onslaught, till they writhe as if in agony. And over garden and lawn, over field and hedge and open village thorough-fare scurrying leaves fly affrighted, turn cartwheels, are caught in fences, are wedged in shrubs and under steps, are swirled up into space, where stained, torn, vacillating, futile, they become the sport of every wind that blows.

Thereafter, the drama of fall moves steadily forward. You are reminded of Robert Hichens' impression upon approaching the desert: "It seemed as if God were putting forth His hand to draw gradually all things of His creation, all the furniture He had put into the great Palace of the world; as if He meant to leave it empty and utterly naked." The first thing to be drawn are the leaves. And their withdrawal forms the line of demarcation between early and late fall. Beauties of form and outline, hitherto unsuspected, appear. There is a grandeur about the denuded landscape. It has become classic.

And now commences what is commonly known as the getting in period. On many a potato-patch the foreground of Millet's masterpiece may be seen enacting itself. And if it is "the year" for apples, crisp October afternoons are profitably and not unpleasantly passed picking by hand and wheeling away rounded barrels of a score of varieties.

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A great appetizer is the air, these days. Everything stored in the back cellar "makes your mouth water." Such a place as this back cellar is. An institution in itself. Here a wealth of pumpkins—that on the afternoon before the first frost were severed from their russet-green stems in the corn field to roll valleyward in helpless rotundity—glow cheerily in the subdued light, suggesting the *rôle* they will fill on approaching Thanksgiving dinner menus. Here are boxes of pale celery, boxes of ruddy beets and carrots, heaps of squashes and turnips, mountains of potatoes. And here, in goodly array, are the apple barrels, themselves.

"When," writes John Burroughs, "you are ashamed to be seen eating an apple on the street; when you carry them in your pocket and your hand does not constantly find its way to them; when your neighbor has apples and you have none and you make no nocturnal visits to his orchard. . . . then be assured you are no longer a boy either in heart or years." And to few of us is it given to see a striped Duchess, to taste a pink-veined St. Lawrence, to feel a slippery Fillbasket, or to get a whiff of a fragrant Russet or Fameuse without being taken back to the days of "hoards" in queer, unfrequented places. Or to séances held in the wood cellar on dark, rainy afternoons, when the tales recounted were oft times of such gooseflesh raising

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quality that the Tallman Sweets and the McIntosh Reds went unsampled.

This is the season of the Church of England festival, the Harvest Home, and of Hallowe'en—that one night of all the year relinquished to the escapades of ingenious adolescence. It is also the season for threshing, for making cider and drying apples. While the first of these, with its back barn surroundings, machinery, horses, swarthy-visaged, loud-talking men, and air of mystery, withal, exercises a potent spell over the small boy about, the last is, perhaps, a more social event. It is usually reserved by the higher powers that be as a special treat for Friday nights, when “lessons” are renounced, and the big, warm kitchen becomes the resort of chattering, competitive parers, and quarterers, and stringers.

Nutting parties are now all the vogue. The woods ring with the voices of expert discoverers of burry beechnut and sticky green butternut oblong. Now and again a hound, his nose to the ground, goes bounding through, followed, at a proper interval, by one of Nimrod's peripatetic descendants, reduced to rabbit hunting, or to bringing down an occasional duck or a chance partridge.

Returning late one afternoon from a tramp over the hills, you hesitate before going in to your open fire of blazing pine knots. In the gathering murk the garden

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looks uninviting, only the spruce-covered strawberry bed and perennials, and the excavations where the house plants and the bulbs have been, remaining. No use in going over. You wander down the road, automatically turning off to the lake. Bleak it is, and cheerless, and cold. Not a vestige of color anywhere. The shore is spongy with recent rains. Stems of drowned leaves obtrude from the discolored sand. The boats have all been housed except one old green, flat-bottomed punt that lies half-submerged among the reeds.

You stand still, looking out across the bay at the heaving grey waves rolling inward. And as you look the strength, the tonality of them, enters into you, bringing with it the realization that of softness alone nothing great ever comes; that it is not enough to do; to achieve your supreme Destiny you must *be*.

And then out where the water looms blackest something very small and white comes swirling down. Another. And yet another. Till the air is thick with enbattling flakes, and the wind, keening over far, rain-scoured reaches, announces with clarion blast the advent of Winter.

21.

A Winter Mosaic

A Winter Mosaic

WINTER, to Canadians, means something other than the negation of summer, is more than landscape served up in the guise of a "crystal johnnycake." Even the prelude has its distinctive charm. A wealth of homely comfort, beyond all intrinsic value, is wheeled into the cellar with every barrel of rosy-cheeked apples, with every bushel of plebeian turnips and beets and cabbages. The smell of rain on fallen leaves, the soft greys with which the sky is hung, the bare grace of the trees, leaf-stripped and attenuated, all lead to the comatose, *listening* stage, whose utter bleakness is one day lightened by swirling snowflakes. They sift down between the corrugated ridges along country roads. They melt into one another, and then, great wads of wool that they are, wage mighty battles in the air. They lose themselves forever in little sedge-girt pools where lonesome winds stir sighing through the sparse frozen leaves. They creep up and over the hedges. They whiten the windward side of trees. And country folk, driving in with great clots of frozen mud sticking to their

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wheels, call out to one another as they pass, "Quite a little winter!" With the dusk a musical cascade breaks through the muted whiteness—the first sleighbells.

If history is the biography of great men, winter—a Canadian winter—is the agglutination of certain phases of country life. Of these phases drawing wood is, perhaps, the most universal. Go upon what road you may, in village or country, you are sure to see a span of slow-moving horses and behind them a load of logs, or furnace, or block wood. Sometimes as many as six or seven sledges, from different cross-roads, pass processionally down the village street, chains zigzagging under each. Then there is a lively exchange of greetings, and Attic salt, smacking of the foothills evokes the hearty laugh of health and lives lived in the open. Striking enough are some of the big red-whiskered men in their helmet-shaped caps, red mittens and leggings, and long baggy khaki coats caught in at the waist with blue or red sashes. Though the more well to do farmers sport coon coats, and very good ones at that. The wood that they bring has been cut when and as the pressure of farm work permitted, and left in piles in the clearing for the slack days and the good roads of winter. In summer one often sees these wood roads branching off from the main, and if one gratifies one's curiosity so far as to follow them up is speedily convinced of the wisdom of the woodman in waiting for winter's carpet.

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When "the back of the winter is broken" big cakes of ice take the place of wood on many of these sledges. These cakes are sawed from pond or lake by men engaged for the purpose by the day, cutting at the rate of two cents for every fifteen inch wide, twenty-four to thirty inch long, fifteen inch thick cake. As the patrons have to take their day or days turn about, the ice season is often a long one.

Fishing through the ice is a means of livelihood with a certain class. With the aid of what they call "tip-upes" several lines can be used simultaneously. On one Eastern Townships lake a man took up his quarters in a portable hut, where all of the necessities and some of the luxuries of life made it the cosiest sort of a retreat in inclement weather.

"There are three conditions essential to a true vision of natural scenery," says Theodore F. Munger: "That one must spend one's childhood in the presence of it, must leave it, and later on return to it." Inherent bucolic tastes often conspire to make the city born and bred revert to primal pursuits. But that deep, passionate love "felt in the blood and felt along the heart" for things inanimate, which is part and parcel of the country boy's very existence, can never, in the natural order of things, be his. To the former a sort of second sight is vouchsafed. He sees more in "things" for the simple reason that propinquity has made him *feel* them

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more. For him everything has a deep significance. For him that singularly beautiful phenomenon, an ice storm, is an event. He goes to bed one thawing February or March night with the drip-drip of the eaves in his ears. He wakes to the grey of dawn, acutely conscious of a deficiency of bed clothes—and of a muffled, insistent, ringing sound from beyond the frost-embossed window pane. Later, he steps out and right into a page of the Arabian Nights. Every tree, every twig, every least bit of hedge and fence and telephone wire is encased in a glittering setting of ice. And a cold breath—the veritable Spirit of Winter—plays upon each tree and twig, and they ring and ring again with elfin music. It is all very weird, very Dantesque. Nothing, you say, could well be more ghostly. And then the sun rises. And the cold austerity of a wintry world is changed in a twinkling. Each glassy case becomes a prism shot through with rainbow hues. The effect is indescribable. You walk and look and listen. Sapphires and diamonds and rubies wink at you at every turn. It is fairyland. It is like living at the heart of an ice crystal. And ever you hear the strange tinkle of myriad bells. Invisible presences brush you by. And a cobweb grey veneers the far reaches and the great boulders where the road clefs the drift. Almost they seem like the divinely-conceived, parti-finished efforts of a sculptor, so purely beautiful so ex-

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quisitely chiselled are they, the idea in each awaiting but the touch of genius to bring it forth.

They are virile, tonic, our Canadian winters. Whatever vitality or go-at-it-iveness there is latent in a man they bring out. We see it in the work, and we see it in the play. The very air is primed with the bacillus of life—the life that accomplishes, counting not the cost. Things cease to be the same things in winter. The very nights are different, something more intense than we have known. Forgotten are the moon-blached spots “where the gypsy bands of dream pitch camp.” Cold, invigorating, inspiring, somehow they let us into the secret that to achieve is better than achievement, and the race of more worth than the goal. They are startling, too, in their power of suggestion. A wooded ravine that in the prose of daylight wins hardly a glance, with the mystic winter light upon it becomes a Doré scene, where the gnarled and twisted branches and uprooted trunks symbolize the remorseful agonies of the lost. Or on a night of wind and storm the trees along drifting roadsides peer, slanting darkly, ever fleeing, as it were, from some malign presence behind. Or, on evenings of distilled poetry, the moon riding high in a cloudless sky lights the tiny icicles depending from the twigs of evergreens—and one is carried all the way back into the Christmas of childhood. Or all the way into the world of sculpture by the perfectly

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moulded, stalactitic formations caught and held by bushes swaying, Narcissuswise, over the glazed mirror of winding rivers.

Countless other influences there are, so familiar as hardly to penetrate the consciousness, but playing their part in generating and strengthening our national traits. The night smell of snow under sentinel stars; a hillside done in contrasted black and white blotted, slowly, from day's canvas by the descending brush of night; the protective calm of pines under a sunset sky; interval lands, hardly seen, as the lust of speed and the provocation of good skating carries you at dusk up the river into the cathedral hush of woods; a snowplough pushing its way valiantly through the deposit of a three day's storm; the first taste of spring in the air, the first hint of spring upon the hills—these hold within them things other than on the surface appear. These we carry away with us wherever we may go, our heritage, the spell of Canadian country life.

22.

Byways *of* Quebec

Byways of Quebec

WHEN Melba was in Quebec there was a room at the Chateau Frontenac from which she had to be almost literally torn to meet her engagements. It was one of the suite furnished throughout with the veritable four-poster, chairs and whatever that had belonged to Jacques Cartier, Champlain and Montcalm. Incidentally it was also possessed of a view. I had first seen it, this view, expanded on all sides, from the King's Bastion. It was a grey day and windy, and the soldier who did the honors of the Citadel designated by one name and another the buildings covering the forty acre area within the chained gate, and then he strode on ahead toward a solitary gun surmounting a circular abutment of the portholed walls. I saw the outward-pointing gun silhouetted against the sky, the short, wind-curved grass, and then I saw—Quebec. After a little the soldier drew near. Those were the Laurentine Mountains; below the villages of Lorette, Charlesbourg, Beauport and Montmorency Falls; there Valcartier, where the First Contingent camped; that was the Island of Orleans, and that Levis; in the middle distance Louise Basin and

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the Lower Town; to the right Wolfe's Cove and Sillery; behind the Plains of Abraham. He turned to go, then, as I made no move to follow, waited at a little distance, perhaps understanding.

"Quebec is replete with historic interest."

"Quebec is picturesque."

"Quebec is not like any other city in the world."

You may have read that. You may have been told it. But there are some things which have to be seen to be appreciated. Quebec is one of those things.

Since that day I had climbed all of the two hundred and something steps above the clock in the Parliament Building, and taken a bird's eye view of Quebec and its environs. I had ridden in a *calèche* by Wolfe's Monument, and taken the conventional drive past the toll gate on the St. Louis Road as far as the scene of the bridge disaster—returning by way of the Monument Aux Braves who fell on both sides in 1760, and the beautiful birch-encircled residences on the St. Foye road. I had "done" all the things that are generally done in Quebec. But something seemed ever to escape me. For a city to discover to one her innermost secrets one must seek her in her byways.

Through the window of the Champlain room violet shadings were stealing over the river. Levis was painted in contrasting purples and greys and blacks—all sombre, grim and ineffably remote, with the desola-

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tion of brooding storms. Dwarf-like shapes appeared to be vastly busy unloading thimblish objects that might be barrels from one of the several liners already beginning to merge into the other shipping on the quay. The serried roofs of the Lower Town turned blacker. Lights sprang up in the streets. Levis, but now a sable outline, was pricked with lights. Lights twinkled from the boats on the Louise Basin, from the ferries plying across the void to Levis, from the barges floating up the river to Montreal. It was all exactly like the illustrated page of a fairy tale. Like voices calling—calling urgently to come and see Quebec. The old Quebec. The real Quebec.

Next day I went.

Rather like being transplanted from one world to another it is to step in the elevator in the Kiosk on the Terrace, where the beauty and chivalry of Quebec are promenading, and out on Le Petite Champlain street where pedestrians and primitive conveyances alike commingle on the narrow board pavement. Local color here and to spare! The houses under the perpendicular, slaty cliff look their age. And that—if one may judge from the crumbling apertures exhibiting a thickness and discoloration of wall that is not of our time—in considerable. Reflecting that one's receptive powers are limited, and that it is better to carry away a lucid impression of little than a scrambled

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memory of much I accost a stranger and, in the vernacular of French-Canadians, "put a question into him." He smiles and shakes his head, giving with the histrionic skill of the race with whom civility is a tradition, a most successful pantomime of regretful ignorance. Perhaps a score of nondescript individuals have passed before I single out a man conspicuously deficient in the nicer adornments of dress.

"Can *you* tell me where Sous-le-Cap street is?"

"You has axed the very man as *can* tell ye," he responds promptly. "I lives thar three year ago. I wuz in thart landslide. I" and as he retraced his steps to show the way, he gave the homely, vivid little details which indelibly graven themselves in the memory of those who have in a moment lost their all.

A draggling line of clothes spanned the space said to be the narrowest thoroughfare in America. A cart of garbage all but blocked the way. The children were unkempt without being picturesque. And yet something there was about the little untidy, joyless houses, that made you shudder what they must be in winter, which gave atmosphere, *tone*.

Though tone is at a premium in this maze of crooked streets that have grown after the fashion of the streets in old towns, instead of being laid out like the streets in new. You give yourself over to the enchantment of their spell. And sometimes it is to a near view of the



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cabalistic names of ships they bring you. Sometimes to the Lower Town Church of Notre Dames des Victoires, built in 1688, and dedicated at the inauguration of the fête of Notre Dame des Victoires "To Heaven in gratitude of the French for the memorable repulse of Sir William Phips' attack on Quebec in 1690, and the providential escape of the town from surrender to Sir Hovenden Walker's formidable armada, wrecked on Egg Island, in 1711."

The Montcalm Market, of a Saturday morning, abounds more in those contrasts which are one of the never-failing surprises of Quebec. Rows of covered waggons, back to back, with only enough room between for the crowd to percolate through, are presided over by old habitant women in broad-brimmed black hats and vari-colored checked aprons. Displayed to the best advantage in the back of each waggon and depending from all sides are the fruits of harvest and herbs of unknown names and attributes. Over these improvised stalls the old women bend, gesticulating with their bony and wrinkled hands, haranguing with toothless mouths which in repose pucker to a point. You stop and buy a quart of walnut-sized yellow tomatoes—not in the least because you have any use for yellow tomatoes as such, but just because they are not red. While they are being duly measured and bagged, you watch two sweet-faced nuns at the next stall. They are dif-

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ferent if you like. Their pure faces and flowing black robes accentuate the picturesque garishness of the heterogeneous, heckling throng. As do the priests, they may be monks of the Sulpician Order, brown-garbed, girdled and sandaled, or a Father of the Church of the Good Shepherd, but they always italicise, as it were, whatever scene they happen to be in.

Quebec was never less in danger of becoming a defunct museum of antiquities, but neither in her present does she allow you to forget her past. Massive blondes in uniform canter down from the Citadel, or walk cheek by jowl with desiccated old age in the streets that plunge downward with the precipitation of stairs. But on the Battery, and in Buade Street and St. Louis, the historic atmosphere still lingers. And within the high-boarded enclosure on St. Michel Street an old priest walks slowly, reading as he walks his Breviary.

23.

Winter's Artistry

Winter's Artistry

RODIN has been said to compete with Nature because he turned sculpture into life. But the ordinary artist reverses the order and turns life into whatever medium his art happens to take. While he is under compulsion to see every object as in itself it really is, if he is wise he exercises his eclectic prerogative and eliminates all but what it behooves him to see. When he has learned to do this for him the ugly, the inharmonious, no longer exist. Things are beautiful because they are true, because they embody the eternal rhythm.

Especially is this the case in winter, when the country resembles nothing so much as a sculptor's studio. Everywhere are poetic conceptions in varying stages of completion. They create in you a taste-measure even as might the contemplation of plastic art in veritable museums. If you have acquired the habit of solitude and are not bored by the absence of people, an indefinable quality of otherworldness holds communion with you in these winter peregrinations. Language, at best but a halting vehicle for our ideas, here stops short altogether. But the winds, and the river, and

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the hills, snow-cowled, are in themselves a language, a music. They play upon our inner consciousness until our identity is merged. That lasts while you are, as it were, walking into them. But if you stop, if you sit down, at once is your observation to the fore. Critically you connote the charming vignette of river serpentine, clustering village and church spire glimpsed through two interlaced twigs of a Norway spruce, hoar-frosted; the symmetrical convolutions of undulating drifts that wander up many hills only to wander down again; the lineal perfection of the huge blocks of snow thrown up from the tunneled track.

Perhaps your peripatetic proclivities have taken you to the marshlands, whose level stretches are patterned out in scale-like crustations. You could strike right across for the lake, but better you like to follow the river along. Midstream the current still flows black and sinister, but the edges are collared with jagged points of filigreed ice, fragile as thinnest glass or cobweb lace. The banks are quite hidden beneath snowy mantles that have a graceful trick every now and again of half-slipping off. Overarching these, and bending Psyche-like above the ebony mirror of the river, are alders, their pendant fingers dyed a rich red-brown. Wild cucumber vines, blanched and shrivelled, wave eerily from the snake fence, making a good foil for the shoots of dogwood blazing near. Pushing these

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aside, you scrape away the fleecy surface snow with your foot, and stooping close to the ice see through the sheerness of it a wonderful garden down below. Branching strands, green and yellow and umber, like seaweed curve ever so gently with the current. Tawny-coated stones and pebbles glitter beneath strange amphibious growths. And a log which above ice is only just a log, in that shimmering light becomes the magic carpet upon which Peter Pan and the fairies hold nightly carnival.

Passing on you come presently to the river proper, where all the branches unite. "The only passionate life," says George Eliot, "is form and color." And there is something compelling about the curving lines gliding through the forest silences, never once divorced from beauty either in conception or execution. In its frozen passivity yet is it intensely alive, recalling characters whose inner strength is felt, though they do nothing, who elevate though they speak never a word. Now cat-tails, chocolate-helmetted, march in serried ranks beside it. Now flowers and grasses of summer, metamorphosed by a process of blanchment and snow-etherealization, blossom out, weird ghosts of gardens. Now, from beneath protective evergreens, ground hemlock and partridge berries show cheerily forth. But gradually they all draw back. Alone and unsupported the river sweeps onward, gaining ever in majesty, till it gives its water to the lake.

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The colors of winter, which are summer's colors spiritualised, do not call out to you. They wait. And you come. Sometimes there seems no color there, only the sharply-contrasted purple and black and white of the mountains and the trees and the snow. But snow is never white and white only. Mostly it is blue-white. Under a pearly white sky, behind which a cold weather sun is in hiding, it is flesh pink. In woods where silhouettes of evergreen branches lie foreshortened, mauve, violet, or deepest indigo, according to the intensity of light. The rabbit tracks—crossed and re-crossed, till they look like the perforated sheets through which we as children used to trace toy pictures—are black stains on the virginal white. And so with other things. Color and contrast everywhere. Above, filmy clouds are ever painting the landscape new, ever lending themselves to Nature's lyric improvisations. Sometimes they light upon a baby hill, which becomes on the instant the towering peak of the Brevant. They shift, they dissolve, they reform. As mighty cliffs they climb the sky, and against them breaks the palpitating blue with admirable simulation of ocean tide. And the snow reverberates back the sunlight they distil, and every least pastel of tapering tree, or winding road, or village vista, has them for its bass-relief.

But it is not in days of staccato-like intensity that the essential artistry of winter is to be found. That has

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to be surprised, must be taken unawares. Blueprint days are ideal for this. But you must leave behind village streets. Must forsake the road and take to the fields. If your blueprint day comes in midwinter it will simply give to the landscape a Whistleresque vagueness of outline and elision of non-essentials. But if earlier, the snow disappears as by magic, leaving the ploughlands striped zebra-wise, and the hillsides a canvas on which a winter scene painted over a summer one has been partly scraped off. And yet the effect does not jar. All is harmonious.

Again close observation discovers color where you had thought to find none. Nothing could be richer than the toned burnt umber of the ferns that have not yet yielded up their beauty. The evergreens in that strange light represent more than all the shades of green for which you have names. Carmine are the trees skirting upland clearings. The maples that follow intersecting cross-roads till they blur in the white mist, are silvery-gray. The pond, betwixt its swart fringe of pines, has taken on the sinister opaqueness of a putrescent pool. But the distances are all blue—the blue that calls, that makes you feel that you are walking into the hidden mysteries of life. Night comes on swiftly. No sunset. Just a closing in and a blotting out. The mist thickens. A fine snow like a gauzy veil comes reefing down. The fields are powdered with it. The great

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granite boulders are powdered with it. You are powdered with it. Nothing is as it was. Everything, along its own special lines, has become wonderfied. Through this herculean canvas, on which many pictures are painting themselves, you walk, the smell of snow all around you, the taste of snow on your lips. But when through the crepuscular curtain the lights of home twinkle forth, something from the far-away leaves you, the thing that is behind the thing, which ends where human life begins.

Mystically beautiful are the sunrises of winter, full of the gold that Pater says is the primary color of delight. Out of the hush of paling stars you see color born, expand, blaze upward. There are silver sunrises and vermilion, saffron and sapphire and amethystine, according to the predominant note in the color overture. Clouds of mottled grey interpenetrated with blue, clouds of blue scalloped with magenta, compounded colors such as you have not seen since paint-box days, are intermingled in a way which has led artists to aver that "Nature puts them out." In the West a lopsided moon is rapidly losing caste. The strange previsioning radiance of dawn that is not light but a glow, deepens. One after another the cold peaks become incarnadined. A moment so and a thread of fire wavers on the horizon, widens into a scintillating ball, swings clear, and the sun is embarked on its journey zenithward.

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Sunrises and sunsets can be compared only to be contrasted. One is a Beethoven symphony, the other a Wagner opera. In the latter you are not conscious of the silence as of "a world walking among men," but the esoteric beauty of it you absorb as you would an articulate perfume. It is more sensuous, more permeated with scenic nuance, in a world more frankly pagan. Down a color scale of *couchant* westering clouds goes the sun, and as he goes, as he strikes each diaphanous arpeggio, it takes on new shades—shades so uncopyable that the emulative artist feels the utter futility of attempting to reproduce them by brush or pen. There is always a something more, that is felt as well as seen, and heard as well as felt. Even when the clarity of the air makes the spectacle as hard as a painting of Manet's. But this "something more" differs in essence and in degree. Daffodil sunsets, seen through a filter of slim white birches, have an atmosphere quite other from those split like crimson flowers along the sky.

And in neither is the quality we have come to associate with subastral snows. A moonlight night, a country road, a frozen stream between mica-dusted banks, woods, ermine-weighted, fields a-glitter with all the gems of the Taj, hills white and purple marbled—these are a tangible music, which call up mental states of a more profound because of a more disembod-

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ied ecstasy. Impressions, details, in that rarefied air, are apt to blur. All beauty seems equal, sublimated. And when, up the road faint and far, comes the sound of sleighbells, ringing, ringing, almost you mistake them for the Pipes of Pan, fluting the universal music of the world.

24.

Our Yesterdays

Our Yesterdays

CANADIANS as a nation are in danger of emulating George Eliot's perennially "So Young" man. We have become so accustomed to saying, and hearing others say that we have no past, that we forget that what may have been true of a hundred years ago has had time in which to change. It has changed. We have made history. We have acquired customs, legendary lore, relics. Above all, relics.

While museums exemplify the distance that we have travelled since "the good old days," they are not the best place in which to extract the old time flavor. An attic—a country attic—is. Not the kind where empty trunks and hat-boxes and the surplusage of life are temporarily stored, but the kind where things we want to keep represent the survival of the most prized heirlooms of several generations.

It is a great place in which to spend a rainy afternoon, and resorted to usually only in inclement weather it has come to be associated in your mind with the description of Chesney Wold in "Bleak House," where "the rain is ever falling, drip, drip, drip, by day and night upon the broad-flagged terrace pavement of the

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Ghost's Walk." You hear its staccato welcome as you push up the trap door at the head of the third story stairs. Downstairs the color has gone out of everything. Ruminating apathy if not actual somnolence prevails. The inversion of this is the case up here under the eaves, where every object upon which your eyes light goes off, as it were, like matches struck on the box. At first there is a plethora of riches in the illumination. You see nothing in detail, but in an all-pervasive way, content to roam about letting the atmosphere soak in, subconsciously following the dictum, laid down by Lord Chesterfield in one of his inimitable letters to his son, never to give the tone to a company but to take it from them. Such tone! How it talks! Reminding us that "we are all things that make and pass, striving upon a hidden mission out to the open sea."

The contrast between past and present modes of life are here clenched as in a nutshell. Though the greater familiarity of the latter has the effect of eliminating them as completely as if they were subject to the incantations of an Arabian Night's genii, or had donned for the nonce the vanishing cap of one of Howard Pyle's princes. Depending from beams overhead, in corners, along the walls, in worn leather trunks, camphor boxes, oil barrels, puncheons, and in promiscuous heaps on the floor, are a multiplicity of things redolent

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of the days when it was a wise precaution to make fast your cabin door of a night against prowling marauders from the forest.

Here is a pressed bed, which by day stood upright like a wardrobe, and by night let down into a couch, a rose-patterned carpet bag, a metal foot-warmer, a warming-pan of burnished brass to be filled with coals and, manipulated by a long handle, passed up and down between the sheets before the family retired, cold nights. There a spinning wheel and flax wheel, once staple features in every living room, where flax was spun into yard ready for the loom, and thrifty housewives carded, spun and wove homespun for clothes and bedding. The queer old iron kettle in which sanap pudding was boiled was the one that swung from the crane above the renowned fire that went out when "the folks" were away and flint, steel and tinder-box ineffectual, and had to be rekindled by a redoubtable little girl ancestress fording a swollen river and walking several miles through the forest to the nearest neighbors for a fresh shovel of coals. Cheek by jowl with a cushion made out of the scarlet coat worn by one of the Regulars during the Fenian Raid of 1865, is the four-poster under which a stoned and bleeding man who had been mistaken for a Fenian was concealed by the women, while the mob pounded at the street door with all the tenacity of militant Suf-

fragettes. The huge wooden quilting frames recall tales of the merry makings following in the wake of quilting, raising, logging, husking and paring "bees."

The other expedients once in vogue for occupying spare moments are represented by tallow candle moulds, and a complicated contrivance for supplying the ailing of the community with home-manufactured pills. Though the favorite pastime—to judge from the yellowing epistles tied up with ribbons as faded as the flourishes—was laying one's heart's secrets bare with a naive unreserve at times truly lyric. The Long Box, in which these specimens of a defunct literature are immured, also contains the beaded capes, bonnets and pin-cushions, the crocheted antimacassars, and the real lace scarfs and hand-embroidered underwear of an age when haste and the strenuous life had not impelled Professor Gooley to write his strictures on their detrimental effect upon the crystallization of Art.

But to see one side of anything only, is not to see even that truly. Wooden hinges, carpet bags and the like were, figuratively-speaking, one side of Our Yesterdays, but only one side. The other side is not so easy of access, and consequently of more vital importance. You come upon it quite unexpectedly—this other side, this thing behind the thing, this integral kernel of every era, and symbol of our political history—while burrowing among old *Godey's Lady's Books*, *Littell's Liv-*

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ing Age when Mrs. Oliphant, Walter Pater, and James Payn were contributors, and *Harper's Weeklies* where Wilkie Collins and Thomas Hardy had not yet been superseded by the new young writer of Indian tales for whom Andrew Lang "does not anticipate a popular popularity," nor believe Europe to be the proper sphere for the future author of "The Recessional," Like the hero in "Pinafore," who "might have been a Roosian, a French, or a Turk, or a Proosian, or perhaps a Italian," but who, "in spite of all temptations to belong to other nations," is "an Englishman" your party loyalty is of a dye almost pre-historic. And the sight of that heap of old *Grips* (that "Independent Journal of Humor and Caricature," dating from 1865) and blue books of Parliamentary debates evokes the political spirit of the "Double Shuffle" regime. Brings back flocking memories of bygone elections, where whirlwind campaigners at the hustings promised in perfervid trope never to sacrifice public good to political expediency, and in the choicest flowers of pamphleteering grand eloquence assured their credulous electorate that they would stamp out the hybrid sin of bribery and corruption with the iron heel of a Claverhouse, if *they* were returned to power.

Turning to the blue books, you open the speech delivered in the Legislative Assembly during the debate on the subject of the Confederation of the

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British North American Provinces by one Christopher Duncan Esq., Member for Brome. There are sixty-four pages of fine writing in this speech which, in the light of subsequent history, is a curious document, expressing as it does the belief that no good will result from Confederation. To read it to its finish is to be conscious of the same bewilderment experienced in reading Plato or Aristotle on the Solar System. There is no flaw, seemingly, in the logic. The deductions are not inconceivable. But the conclusion arrived at is wide of the mark, because the hypothesis is wrong. Deficient though it is in forensic insight, however, it serves the not inconsiderable purpose of making us appreciate the difficulties with which "The Fathers of Confederation" had to cope, and the fine patriotism which for a time caused the political boundary line to disappear in the Coalition of the two parties.

The next blue book is a thick one of over six hundred pages. The wide margins are copiously illustrated with youthful political caricatures of the Goodfellows and the Noses (the latter soubriquet bestowed on account of the protuberant feature of their chief) engaged in all the imaginable and unimaginable stages of punitive combat, the reverses of real life being here revenged by summary and dire defeat being meted on the foe upon every page. The subject matter thus decorated comprises, among other things, the Haldimand

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and Bouquet collection of letters, as well as General Haldimand's private diary. Terse, cogent, graphic, the words paint pictures of conditions and affairs at large, in Canada, while the vivacious French-Canadian belles were coquetting with the officers on the "particular battery which is a kind of little Mall," at Quebec. Now it is a widow begging that the Indian who murdered her husband be brought to justice; Gen. Gage regretting that a certain convoy was delayed by a scalping party; minutest directions regarding the proper way to cook a ham; petitions "thick as leaves that strew the brooks at Vallambrosa" for pardon and release from prison, for having a bridge to cross the river, for pay for ferrying troops, for employment, pensions, relief The pages flutter through your fingers. The light in the attic grows dim.

From somewhere very far away floats up the siren toot of an automobile horn. Your name, reiterated again and again.

Slowly you come back to the attic, to the queer, grotesque objects merging into the corner shadows, to the dilapidated *Grips* and blue books, to the realization that Maeterlinck was right when he said "the chief mission of the Past is to bring us to the moment at which we are."

25.

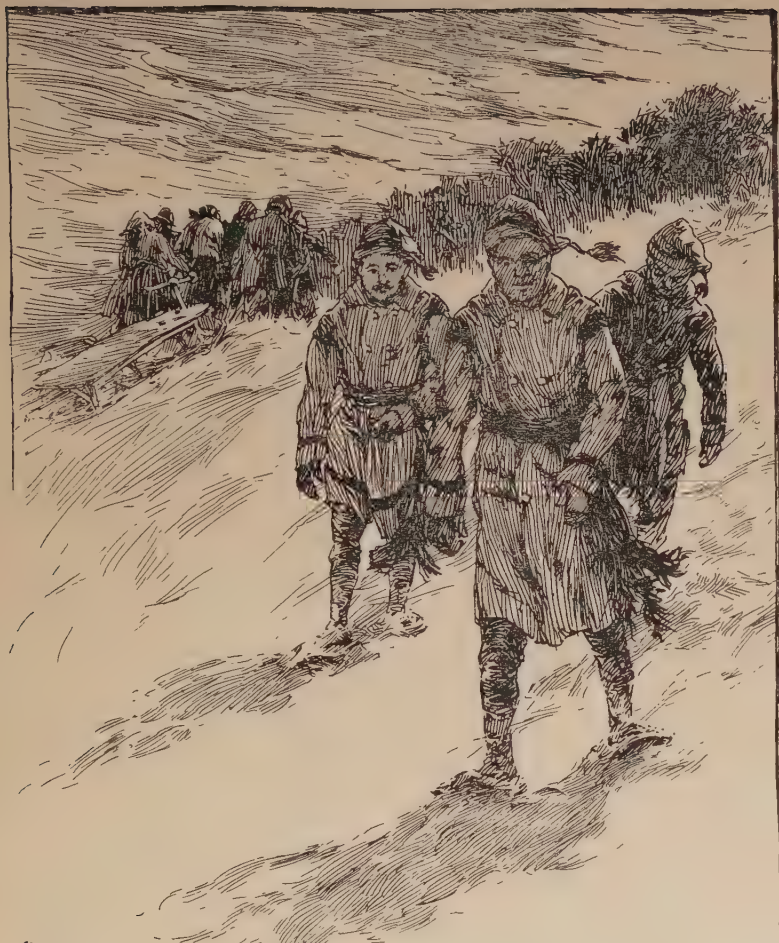
Mid-Winter Diversions

Mid-Winter Diversions

“**I**N skating, as, indeed, in the other winter sports to which it is akin,” writes Mr. E. F. Benson of Swiss pastimes, in an English periodical “we enjoy a manner of locomotion which is the romance and the lyric of movement compared to the dull prose ground out by wheels or feet.” And he goes on to asseverate that “in no other branches of motion than these ice-sports, unless perhaps in swimming, do we get the same delicious quality of movement.” How right he is in this only the frequenter of lake, river, pond or rink can form any adequate estimate. We give lake and river first place with thought prepense. After a thaw followed by a more or less precipitate drop in the thermometer life holds few pleasures greater than to sling your skates over your shoulder and start off across the fields for the lake. The icy crust is firm enough to support your weight except in the fringe of wood through which you must pass. Here you occasionally “get in” over your knees, strands of moist green moss sometimes coming up from the abysmal depths, sticking to your moccasin. Last year’s cat-tails and stalks of goldenrod prick through beautifully

symmetrical mounds. "Pussies" have not yet begun to swell the willows. The maples and ash are grey, accentless. Only the evergreens are at their best. Girding them about, disappearing up woodland aisles, doubling and redoubling upon themselves are rabbit tracks. And from afar the deep baying of hounds in pursuit shivers the air.

Emerging upon the lake shore, you look out across three by four miles of ice. And *such* ice! For it is not all alike. Sometimes, the night before, a little breath must have rippled the surface water, which congealed in frozen laughter. Sometimes you glide down glassy serpentine, pent in on either side by ice that has refused to submit with a good grace to its destiny. Often you swerve sharply to right or left to see where such and such a curve will bring you. "One sheet of glass" is a favorite expression with many, who are desirous of conveying the idea of ice in the pink of condition. That may be the criterion on a rink (that thing of constructive art, which we accept only when there is no alternative) but not on a lake, not on a river, not, we even like to persuade ourselves, on a pond. Given all the alluring unexpectednesses with which the skater on the lake is familiar, and he travels, as it were, from country to country. His is a continual quest for the untried. And the hills look benignly down, powdered and curdled with snow that reverberates the



"you climb the hill
of a thousand slides."

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dazzling sunlight. Slowly, steadily, beautifully, all this changes. Color is born into the sky, grows, expands, leaps from scalloping peak to scalloping peak, suffuses the lower reaches, mellows, and fades away through all the shades of all the colors. Overhead a young new moon gives accent to a liquid vault as yet unlit by stars. And into all this you skate, you mingle. Stingingly alive, for the nonce you are something more—ultra man, demigod.

The same intoxicating exhilaration attends river skating, with the further provocation that lurks ever in the curve just ahead. With it, as with sliding or tobogganing, it is always a case of "just one more."

This latter pastime of joyful horror, as Stevenson dubs it, is less fast and furious in the country than in the city, where the toboggan gallops down more or less perpendicular declivities, as carefully prepared for the purpose as any rink. But the lack in momentum is often made up by romantic surroundings and the elision of any but your own immediate party. You climb the hill of a thousand slides to the scrunching sound of the toboggan that is big enough for all. You gain the top and look off. There is the bump that proves so disastrous to the uninitiated. There the slope patronized by the less daring. Here, just between, the unchartered plunge that goes by the name of "ours" or "theirs" according to the one speaking. "Pile on

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everybody," calls out somebody, and you obey with alacrity. There is a moment of inaction, of suspended breath. Then the toboggan begins to move. You are off. Faster and yet faster! The head goes. The world is not. The snow divides on either side to give you right of way. Particles of it sting your face. The wind sings in your ears. You swim the air. One last mad rush and your blind steed stops, half buried in the drift that rises between the slide and the river. Like those who awake from a dream you stagger up, rubbing the snow from your eyes, drunk with the wine of it. You look back at the trail down which you have come—pressed white ribbon on unpressed white ground. You look at one another with deep intake of breath. For the first time you notice that the stars are out, the Milky Way intensely vivid, the night very still. Then somebody switches the toboggan about, and beats the snow out of it. "Come on," he shouts, "let's have another."

For snowshoeing and ski-ing, the most nomadic of the winter sports, the country is admirably adapted. Meadow expanse and hillside slope are one constant invitation. In skating and sliding, if it is what it professes to be, you have no ulterior thoughts, are hardly conscious of being, are, not to put too fine a point upon it, absorbed. In snowshoeing just the contrary is the case. You are acutely aware of everything you pass by. You see, you feel the penetrating beauty of it, but

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you do not mingle. In a way you are provocative of it. For in Nature's gallery, as well as in man's, we see, and in a way create, what we are constituted to see or create—nothing more. Though our nerves are oftentimes reacted upon by the titillations of atmospheric humors. Lovers of sea or western prairie at first are prone to praise the place of their predilection by the subtle process of bringing against ours the charge of indefiniteness. But in time they come to acknowledge that although our hills have not the grandeur of the Rockies, nor our valleys the fascination of their prairie reaches, they have still a character quite their own. That artist, who cried in a rage that the values were all wrong, in France, would find alleviations here. Tone there is and in abundance. Sometimes incongruities, often weirdnesses. There is something exclamatory about our sunsets. Something operatic about the notes of color that play over the incarnadined hills. But in it all, and impregnated with it all, is a large sanity. Pure and very good to breathe is the air that sweeps over the hills and through the trees. Canada and your mind seem all too small for the flood of energy evoked. If you are one of many, heady jollities are an outlet for exuberant spirits. If alone and wood magic calls, the austere hush of the pine belts wraps you about. What is the secret of the philtre you cannot tell. But an incommunicable *something* whether the incense of the resin or a rejuvenating emanation

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from the trees, thrills you with strange joy, poignant to the verge of pain. Life, in moments like these, takes on new meanings.

Although it is possible to do more "stunts" on skis than on snowshoes, in the country at present the latter are used in the proportion of ten to one. Everyone, I take it, has his favorite time for a tramp. With one it is a night of blanched moonlight and the vocal silence in which great things are fashioned. With another it may be early morning, when the sun rises a blazing orange in the east before the lopsided moon, somewhat the worse for shine, has set in the west; when the sky is steely blue, and hoar frost powders the trees, and here shimmer lilac mists and there red; and the hills are marbled over with white and the optimism of mauve, and the air you breathe is almost more than you can bear. A third, one of those days in March when distances blur, and huge flakes fall out of their allotted time, and the snow in the roads is like muscovado sugar, and a subtle change is over all.

Everywhere is snow. The white birches, which look for all the world like those in the paintings of J. MacWhirter R.A., droop beneath their weighty ermine. The river has not awakened from its long sleep. The rink is still in vogue. But neither field, nor tree, nor river is as it was. Spring is in the air. We are on the precincts of another season.



"A world of
Snow."

C.M.M.

26.

Yule-Tide *in* Canada

Yule-Tide *in* Canada

TRADITION has prescribed atmospheric inclemencies as the fitting precursor of the fête. Sometimes as late as the week before, prognostications of a green Christmas seem likely to be fulfilled. Then the pinched paucity of flakes inadequately blanketing the dun nudity of a rain-scrubbed earth, is succeeded by a snowstorm of the good old-fashioned persuasion. There is something fine, regal, in its unrestrained fury. A great spectacle and an uplifting! For there is all of man's conflict with Destiny symbolized. To let oneself "go" is to *be* the storm, and the stress, and, toward the last, the victory born of travail and the deeps.

Of luminous whiteness is the driven snow that lies in wave-like convolutions along roadsides, and fences, and rivers. The smell of it in spruce coverts where, in the interests of Santa Claus, the Birnam Wood act is perpetrated, invigorates as does subtlest alchemy. Ermine, mica-dusted, bows downward branches that are warmly if darkly green. But the maples, the elms, give the effect of shrinking into themselves, while

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creaking shudders run down their attenuated and snow-encrusted lengths.

It is cold. Very cold. Piercing, biting, searching, bitterly cold! The sleighbells sound like so many tongues chattering within their frozen caverns. Congealed sound is the thin, remote, intermittent whistle of the train "blocked just this side the Junction." The store windows are over-etched with frost designs worthy the genius of a Helleu. And upon the wrong side of them children in the last stages of ecstatic ferment are made to "wait outside" while a mania for buying lamp wicks and similar unseasonable articles keeps their elders an unconscionable long time within, and leaves them curiously unresponsive as to the nature of their purchases, going home.

But if stores are full, and delivering sleighs continually on the go, no less stirring are the scenes of bustlement and good cheer to be glimpsed by availing ourselves of the Stevensonian prerogative of lifting other people's roofs. The kitchens where fallen magnates of the feathery tribe lift plump legs heavenward in mute expostulation, it would seem, at the extraneous ingredients with which their sides are like to burst! The savory odors issuing from saucepans where cranberries are merrily popping open, from front kettles where the Christmas pudding proclaims its presence, from yawning ovens where nut cookies, brown-

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ing buns, pumpkin pies, mince pies—every kith and kin of the pie family—keep fragrant vigil against the morrow's feast! The staircases where the ostracized mournfully camp in the vain hope of getting a fugitive glance into the forbidden room, whence come strange noises, like the rush of a train, the cry of animals, the high, shrill, hurried demand for "Ma-ma!" "Pa-pa!" immediately suppressed, or drowned in peals of indifferently-stifled laughter—after which the grown-ups emerge with mysterious, amused, complacent looks that are maddening. Upstair regions where piping requests to know the whereabouts of Mother's big stockings float down to halls where tactless younger brothers, blithely percolating between kitchen and front door, hail delivers of not-so-much-for-its-intrinsic-value-but-for-the-spirit-in-which-it-is-given donations, with jocular allusions to hair receivers and pin cushions outnumbering strawberries in June. Rooms where holly and mistletoe decorations are going forward, and the tired recumbent on the sofa admits it really does begin to seem like Christmas. Chambers where isolated ones do up "things" with a vast rustling of paper, imperiously cautioning inadvertent intruders: "Don't come in if you don't want to know everything." And, all in good time, the closed room where the tree, or the chairs, or the stockings, as determined by the accepted mode of procedure, have every-

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thing on, with the exception of such additions as Santa Claus shall see fit to supplement in characteristic secrecy.

Christmas Day is not unlike a wedding, in that preparation for it occupies so much time, the event itself so little. It is short, if one may be permitted the paradox, even when it is long. Even, that is, when it begins with someone—who may have been you—ending the crawling hours of sleepless anticipation at the first hint of sickly grey in the black pools that are the windows, by tiptoeing with noisy stealth to the bedside of callously-sleeping elders.

“Are they awake?” you and the other insomnolist ask one another in loud, antiphonal whispers. And when, not unnaturally, “they” do wake up, and tell you to “Get right back into bed this minute; you’ll catch your deaths.” “And it’s the middle of the night, anyway,” joyfully you pounce upon them with shouts of “Merry Christmas!” which effectually arouse the whole house.

Of all recollected moments of childhood, coming down stairs, Christmas morning, stands out in boldest relief. The rapid dressing in the chill December dusk, the manoeuvring required to get everyone up and at the top of the stairs together, the altercation as to who shall head the procession, the queer, panicky, hot and cold feeling that “it” is actually and irrefutably here, the first sight, in the indistinct light, of the heaped chairs, the grotesquely bulging stockings, the bliss unspeakable of opening presents.

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It is a great revealer of character, this opening of presents. There are those who finger everything exploratively before investigating further, wondering what it can be, and "who from." Those who joyously tear open parcel after parcel, calling loudly upon everyone to "Just look at this!" and going on to the next before they have time to do so. The satisfactory ones who greet each unbetissued gift with enthusiastic, "Just what I wanted!" or, "I was hoping someone would give me this!" The unfortunates who are forever being "remembered" by those whom they have failed to remember, and who go about asking if you suppose it is too late to reciprocate now, and eventually resolve upon postponement till another season. The sympathetically constituted who become so engrossed in watching the others, inspecting here, admiring and rejoicing there, that they forget to open their own things, till recalled by someone saying how exactly "like" them it is.

A happy scramble perhaps best epitomizes the quality of the day thereafter. Church—dinner—callers. And, if the weather is propitious, whatever outdoor sport you are anxious to try with "my new" so-and-so.

For coasting, skating, snowshoeing, on Christmas Day is not what it is on any other day of the whole calendared year. We have known the wild waste of

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color splashing a sunset-stained sky; the smell of night snow uprising beneath vault thick-sown with stars; the abandon, the zest of simply living in a white world of action and unthought. But now a something from down the ages, untranslatable, profound, is distilled in the woven webs of blue sunlight. It touches with the glamor of the Great Adventure winged hours spent amid gallery of moon-creating etchings. It reveals vaster issues than "the wordly hope men set their hearts upon." It is the message of the Christ Day.

By way of prolonging Yule-Tide festivities, the night after Christmas, or the night after that, is usually the date set apart for the Christmas tree in the Church basement. Out of a frosty night of low-bending stars, one descends into a pungent atmosphere of kerosene and resinous something, more suggestive if less pronounced. The illuminated Scriptural charts have been pushed back against the wall by the crouching furnaces along with the tables of Harvest Home dinner fame. And the centre of the room is filled with Sunday School scholars, whose numbers—for reasons with which teachers are cognizant—have been augmented wonderfully during the last week or two.

At first there are carols, of course, (though why "of course" you cannot say), when the chirruping crescent on the platform hear themselves called "sweet!" "And so unconscious, the little dears!" and

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endeavor to look more so, or grin, or break down and disgrace themselves, according to their respective sex. Then the minister makes a speech in which "Our debt" recurs frequently. Then there is an intermission during which the children fidget and the rest of the company steadfastly regard the entrance. And then, with much trampling of snow and jingling of bells, Santa Claus to the life comes bouncing down, cracking jokes whose meaning is more flattering than subtle as he prances treeward. The little girls are enraptured. The little boys twine their legs about their own and other people's chairs and crane forward or stand up, and then, recollecting themselves, feign lofty indifference.

"Thomas Alexander Jones," suddenly calls out the minister, who has been deciphering the hieroglyphics on the oblong package detached from the vicinity of one of the angel's wings.

A frenzied convulsion in the far corner, where the bigger boys have isolated themselves.

"Is Thomas Jones here? Does anyone kn— Oh, there you are, Tom."

Santa Claus makes the presentation, and Thomas Alexander, red, self-conscious, beaming, lopes back to his associates, whose urgent entreaties to "Lemme see it," are presently drowned by Thomas Alexander's contemptuous "Rob'son Cruso! A book! Gee! Why, that ain't wuth jinin' fer!"

"Elinus Eaton!"

There appears to be some trouble in discovering Elinus' whereabouts, and some difficulty in dislodging him when found. It takes several "Ah, g'long thar, 'Line. What you scart on?" to overcome his dogged, "You jest lemme be, will ye." But when moral suasion and physical compulsion have prevailed, he turns back, his homely face alight. "Skates! Oh, golly!"

And so the distribution continues, until the tree is shorn of its mystery and only popcorn bags and oranges remain.

"Is there any child here who has not yet received a bag of candy and an orange?"

A scarcely perceptible pause, and then from different parts of the room piping claimants, hissed down by scathing snarls of "You hev, too. I seen you put it thar. 'Fore I'd...."

But Santa Claus is slinging on his pack once more. There is a stampede for the doorway to witness his departure. Someone asks, *sotto voce*, if Jack "didn't do it" well. And someone else is saying: "Well, Christmas is over till next year."

27.

The Unfinished Road

The Unfinished Road

ONLY the initiated know where it begins, and not even the initiated know where it ends. As the interlocked branches of two great spruces spring to behind, a woodsy smell of leaves, and ferns, and ground hemlock, and that indefinable something, which in people we call temperament and in landscapes atmosphere, greets you. A little explorative advancing and the dark tunnel of evergreens, moss-carpeted, gives upon sun-steeped slopes, where sheep like monolithic images pose. Against the skyline one lone Lombardy poplar looms solitary. And fields, intersected by rambling stone walls and streams trickling from shadowed springs, in their turn give place to the maple orchards and butternut groves that have climbed partly up the mountain side, and then "sat down as if to say, 'I climb no farther upward, come what may'."

The path widens.

Now it swerves to escape a huge granite boulder, now doubles on itself that it may pass a queer, picturesquely-slanting thorn apple tree. Ragged scallops of moss begin to overhang the coppery shelving loam, through which broken, fibrous roots protrude. Here

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are a clump of Japanese irises, painstakingly wired in to keep peripatetic intruders out. There weather-beaten stakes hedge about little pines of an obviously different kind. A little farther on a laboriously-constructed culvert fulfils its mission. The same moment your feet strike gravel. You are on The Road.

As it winds upward its quality of evoking, as distinguished from stating, recalls Pachmann's art at such times as he disimprisons the sounds that are music. Everything is in the Nature about us. The quintessence of Things, which comes to us as remembrance, which is not to be heard but overheard, lingers on in the air like spent snatches of wild Aeolian harps. No need here to supply by will functions that by mere contact become automatic. Genius is very near Nature, and Nature is very near the Unseen, and it is by our communications with the Unseen that men are to be distinguished, and the greatness of the greatest consists. Color becomes mood. The mere use of one's eyes happiness enough. Nothing too much to hope to him that is faithful to his hope. The Road is Pagan. It is Christian. It is the all-mirroring modern consciousness, and the beautiful gods of old Greece, in one. Above everything it is itself. There is no place just like it. Henry James, in his *Italian Hours*, calls Venice the easiest city in the world to visit without going there. But one may not visit The Road without



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going there. It cannot be seen by proxy. Like the fragile pink Moccasin Flower or Lady's Slipper, surprised in cloistered ravines near, it will not survive transportation. And you must not only go, you must linger, and remain, and return. Then the grass, foam flecked of flowers, the shimmering green light in the woods as of floating dryads in solution, the very stones of The Road, eloquent of labor and unfaltering purpose, become the equivalent for the Something which is nearer to the core of life than definable thought of tangible things. Nearer than the lore of the botanist or the research of the scientist. For The Road not only takes *from* the landscape, it gives *to* it. Brings, not the nostalgia of cities, but their energizing dominance and practicality, not the ashed regret of civilization, but the soul of its past and the earnest of its future.

Up. And up. And up!

And now you are on a level with the tree-tops. And now you are above them, and a crescent of lake begins to show, and purpling hills, and a Church steeple or two, off where the village drowns. Mayflowers and Dutchman's breeches and trilliums frolic downhill and in little green pockets beneath beetling rocks till, like Peter Pan, you believe they are fairies feeling "dancey" that have not had time to get away, and have followed the example of the boarding school of renown, and entered flowers till the human has passed. On every

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side paths wander away among ferns. Following some you come to the old copper mine, excavated half a century before by rural optimists cherishing delusions concerning the efficacy of hazel twigs as divining-rods. Others bring you to the deserted French-Canadian homestead, where a returned Americanized scion of the old stock has scribbled lugubriously on the plaster of one of the crumbling walls,—

It was here that I was born,
Now I am forgotten and forlorn,
In this room I used to sleep,
Now I return but to weep.

Still others to the prosperous farms of the hill-folk, who are rich in the number of things they can afford to leave alone, veritable exponents of William James' theory that lives based on doing and being are more free than lives based on having.

In order to extract the true beauty and soul of any landscape, one must know where to sit down. The same things cease to be the same things viewed from different perspectives. During your upward climb there have been many places where you have stopped to look back. But it is not until you have reached the elevated bluff, known the country over as the Big Rock, that you sit down. It is like coming to an open window; you see out and around yourself. Was it Mrs. Wharton who

likened Switzerland to an old-fashioned meal, where all the courses are brought on the table at once? This is like Switzerland; it abounds in contrasts. To reproduce it in its entirety an artist would hardly dare, for "the painting of Nature is not always compatible with the nature of paint." About the whole scene is a luxuriance of coloring that has in it a something operatic. Momentarily you expect to hear Geraldine Farrar's exquisite voice thrill nearer and more near, to see Scotti mounting from Nagasaki and the sea.

Glimpsed through a filter of snowy blossoms, or between conical tops of spruces whose tips lean ever so gently away from the breeze, you differentiate the young green of the birches, the yellow-greens of the ferns, the dark bass notes of the evergreens, with here and there a hint of amethyst and heliotrope painted in, in the buds of the maples. Over the surface of the lake, glass-smooth, a peregrinating naphtha launch has left serpentine trail. A canoe is just disappearing up the creek. Sandy points creep out into little reedy bays, where long-legged heron wade unmolested. "Darning-needles" sail upon unchartered voyages with an air of vast importance. Butterflies—white and yellow and black, scarlet-splashed—flutter and light and fade away again among the trees. The vivid green beetle, zigzagging hither and yon on the ledge below, is of a size with the eagle gyrating over against the foothills,

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round a curve in the bay. The soft, silvery eddies of smoke curling back from the far, city-bound train, emphasize your remoteness from mundane complexities. And in a clearing above, across the water, the little Brill Church shines white in the sun.

Turning to objects nearer at hand, observation lowers to a relish of the harmonies of the minor key, sees beauty in the commonplace, in the multiplication of what might be termed features. Among these is a phenomenally tall grey mullein stalk, guarding artfully arranged stones, round which many picnickers and corn-roasters have encamped and swapped tall stories of departed leaders on field and lake and on the tennis court. Into the earth-filled crevices of belichened rocks daffodils and narcissi and crocuses and trailing arbutus and Japanese iris have been carefully transplanted by a loving hand. A colony of slim young apple trees, whose sparse leaves hardly conceal their wooden tags, have recently supplanted the hardhack and Flora's paint brush. And just here, where the mountains are visible from three sides, the level grade where his house was to have been.

Starting to move on, you are conscious of a subtle change. Earth and sky are the same, and the twitter of the birds, and the sound of water falling somewhere over stones, and the good fresh smell of growing things, and the flower faces that have crept up to nod about

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your feet. All the same, and yet—The Road? Where is it? Quietly, naturally, it has run out into trackless ways. In ceasing to be itself it has, like its Builder, become the Universe.

With tranquil patience the traveller beareth
Vexatious delays, and little he careth
If swift or slow he onward fareth,
As he starteth out to roam.

But he greeteth with heartfelt execration
Each unexpected prolongation
As slowly, ah! slowly, from station to station,
He draweth nearer home.

HENRY S. WILLIAMS.



